47457

TESTS: Laverda RGS 1000, Yamaha RZ350, Honda CR250R

SNEAK PREVIEW: Three '84 Yamahas

DECEMBER 1983 $1.50

CYCLE GUIDE

Saddlebag Buyer's Guide

Laverda RGS 1000

Italian Supersport

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MOTOCROSS Magazine, May 1983

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QUOTE
". . . let the touring image take on a European flavor, where speed limits are more honored in the breach than in the observance, and where the journey itself assumes more importance than the destination. Within that scenario, Laverda's RGS 1000 has few peers."
—Pg. 16

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ON THE COVER:
Here comes the speed merchant of Venice: the Laverda RGS 1000. It's a transatlantic triplet that can take you places no Japanese motorcycle can find. Of course, you might need an interpreter once you get there, so turn to page 16; Charles Everitt will be glad to translate, with a little help from the camera of Mush Emmons.

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CYCLE GUIDE

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact.

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'83	April '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/12.3	193	27.2/4.13	6
Honda CR250R-'84	December '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR480R-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.3	226	26.0/3.86	5
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250 CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 430 WR-'83	June '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.4/10.6	246	30.0/5.98	6
Husqvarna 500 CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500 XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KDX200-'83	July '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	9.8/11.0	213	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX250-'83	September '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.1	224	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Sand Spider-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	12.0/12.7	243	27.0/4.72	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki RM125-'83	October '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.7/11.8	200	29.5/4.76	6
Suzuki RM250-'83	February '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.7/12.4	219	29.7/4.84	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.3	233	28.0/4.65	6
Yamaha TT600K-'83	August '83	Trail	Four-stroke	11.7/10.8	280	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha YZ250-'83	March '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.3	217	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RT-'82	May '82	2C/G	979.9	13.862/95.13	126†	523	35–50	148
H-D FLH Classic-'82	August '82	45 deg. 2D/F	1338.6	15.467/82.04	101†	752	32–42	180
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CBX400F-'82	October '82	4A/F	399.1	13.588/96.46	110	402	34–58	128
Honda CB1100F-'83	January '83	4A/F	1062.2	11.224/119.84	144†	550	33–46	135
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.093/111.66	137†	538	25–44	124
Honda FT500 Ascot-'82	August '82	1 B/F	497.7	14.915/83.72	97†	360	47–54	146
Honda GL1100A Aspencade-'83	February '83	4C/G	1085.0	13.515/96.05	152†	752	32–46	131
Honda GL1100I Interstate-'82	April '82	4C/G	1085.0	13.309/99.55	139†	697	40–50	N/A
Honda Nighthawk 550-'83	July '83	4A/G	572.3	12.461/102.97	114	429	37–49	125
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '83	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda V45 Interceptor-'83	May '83	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.963/111.66	138	511	31–40	116
Honda V45 Magna-'82	June '82	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.344/105.88	129	507	30–46	124
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'83	June '83	4A/F	553.8	12.647/102.97	132†	438	42–62	144
Kawasaki GPz750-'83	February '83	4A/F	739.0	12.167/109.22	134†	498	35–51	136
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'82	May '82	4A/F	1089.8	11.328/119.36	137†	534	35–48	127
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.348/96.77	116†	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ750-L3-'83	January '83	4A/F	739.0	12.095/108.95	134†	487	47–53	132
Kawasaki KZ750 LTD-'82	December '82	4A/F	739.0	12.564/105.38	131†	474	41–55	131
Kawasaki KZ1000R-'82	November '82	4A/F	998.6	11.849/116.73	134†	505	35–49	129
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '84	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.236/93.16	106†	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS450G Automatic-'83	February '83	2A/G	448.2	16.412/82.34	94†	410	36–59	143
Suzuki GS550E-'83	June '83	4A/F	572.3	12.593/104.04	120	443	39–47	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	May '82	4A/F	1074.9	11.203/119.30	141†	530	37–49	132
Suzuki GS1100G-'82	September '82	4A/G	1074.9	11.919/114.21	137†	555	42–48	138
Suzuki GS1100GK-'82	October '82	4A/G	1074.9	12.579/104.52	137†	647	31–44	155
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.381/107.14	132†	521	34–46	120
Yamaha RZ350-'83	December '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.343/98.46	112	346	N/A	N/A
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/G	653.4	13.059/103.32	126†	543	35–53	126
Yamaha XJ900 Seca-'83	September '83	4A/G	853.2	11.949/113.20	128	499	34–58	135
Yamaha XS400 Seca-'82	December '82	2A/F	399.4	14.589/89.28	110†	382	47–57	140
Yamaha XZ550R Vision-'83	November '83	70 deg. 2D/G	552.9	13.422/95.23	112	483	39–47	124
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'83	November '83	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.662/102.73	124	739	29–44	153

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive
† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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And the action is at your genuine Yamaha dealer.

YAMAHA

THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

West's Side

The Brutal Truth

Better Sit Down, Bubba, This May Come As A Shock.

• Item from a local newspaper:

A motorcycle breakdown and a bum television set were too much for one Long Island man to endure, so he put the set out of its misery with a shotgun and shot up his home yesterday, police said. Robert Lyons, 23, was arrested and charged with reckless endangerment and criminal possession of a weapon. Lyons had to push his motorcycle to a gas station when it broke down and then have it towed home. That was enough to put him in a bad mood, police said, but when he found his television set didn't work, he was "in a rage."

Hmmm. Reminds of something.

What it reminds me of is the very first column I wrote for this magazine five or six years ago.

That column was one hell of a breakthrough for motorcycle journalism. It used stunning imagery, startling wit and a quote from Shakespeare or somebody to inform an anxiously awaiting public that the Japanese had transformed the motorcycle from a leaky, unstartable two-wheeled calisthenics apparatus into dead-nuts reliable transportation.

And Mr. Dean, the Editor at the time, telephoned to say, wow, he just *knew* he'd made a great choice by having me write for *Cycle Guide,* that the column was a terrific read, he loved the imagery and the quote from Shakespeare or somebody . . . but he wasn't printing a word of it.

He *what!* I gasped.

Not a word, he reiterated. He allowed as how it must've been marvelously exciting for me, "rediscovering the wheel" and all . . . but the real world already knew that the Japanese had redefined motorcycles and didn't need much more in the way of explanation from me. To spend a whole page on the subject, then . . . well, it made me and the magazine look dumb, not to mention, down flat *ignorant.*

He was right, of course. It took a couple more phone calls before I could countenance the fact, but yep, dammit, he was right.

And yet, here I go again *anyway.*

It all began as I was riding along the F.D.R. Drive on a gorgeous, full-mooned August night recently. I realized it all at once. I was clench-fisted, lock-jawed uptight. I'd been uptight for miles. Supposedly, I was out for a nice evening ride and by all outward appearances I was having a fine old time plunking along on my old XT500—yet deep inside my helmet, it was High Anxiety. The Cuban Missile Crisis all over again.

And the reason for it was undeniable. Like it or not, I am a product of my time.

Now, my time, see, was a time when motorcycles were things that didn't start. They made a second kind of motorcycle back then, too—one that started, but wouldn't keep running. (If you're under 30, you have no idea what I'm talking about, but just tap your toes and hum along until you learn the words.) In my time a motorcycle was *not* a substitute for a car. It was a substitute for an unfaithful wife, a neurotic girlfriend, a Vice Principal who hated your guts. In my time you didn't dare turn your back on a motorcycle, not for a second, or it would squirt oil all over your white ducks, then get a flat tire just for the sheer amusement it would cause.

And despite the fact that my present-day XT has been a model of trouble-free, faithful reliability for six solid years, as I rode through darkest Manhattan on this warm, beautiful summer night, I was suddenly *dead certain* my one-lunger was going to quit on me . . . quit and make me push it for *days.* Irrational as it sounds, in my head this 1977 Yamaha had suddenly, magically turned into a 1954 Triumph Cub!

Which was exactly why I quoted the newspaper article earlier.

See, you young guys think you know the whole story. Huh-uh. You just happened to grow up at the right time, a time when motorcycles start, and then keep right on running. You have no idea, though, what it's like to grow up knowing the whole bitter truth—which is, motorcycles *can fail.*

I know, I know. It's a brutal thing to say. You think I'm terrible for doing it. I'm sorry.

But it's for your own good. Someday you'll need to know it. No matter what your prior experience has taught you, someday your bike *is* going to fail and I don't want you thinking you're the first and only rider in history to suffer such a catastrophe. No, God isn't singling you out and punishing for leaving that wad of Juicy Fruit stuck to the bottom of your desk the last day of Math Class. He isn't getting even with you for having those shocking thoughts about Judy Seminov while you wait in line at the cafeteria. No, no, it's not like that at all.

In these days of fail-safe motorcycles, though, it may take you years and years to discover what we over-thirties learned the very first time we kicked-over a bike, namely, motorcycles *can* fail, *do* fail. We suffered the truth of that fact day after day until the Japanese came along, and now you preshavers are reaping the rewards of our suffering. It's not that we bear you a grudge over it—well, not a *big* grudge. But you owe us, kid, you owe us.

So someday if you're out riding with an old guy—say, over 30—and for no apparent reason he suddenly starts getting uptight, don't act too superior. He can't help himself. He's convinced his bike is going to quit, that's all. In his head he's been through the whole nightmare a hundred times—this is the day he hitchhikes home with 80 bucks in his pocket because that's all the guy in the gas station would give him for that rusty, leaky, bad-runnin' old pig. And now he's certain of it—today's the day!

Well, there's no sense arguing with him. Just humor him a little. Buy him some Haagen-Dazs and wait. It's only a Reality Attack from the past, and gradually it will fade. That's when you can remind him that his motorcycle hasn't missed a beat—it's *still running!* And don't forget to remind him about Japanese motorcycles and how things have been different ever since. Speak calmly. Act confident. It may take a moment, but he'll come around.

On the other hand, if you're one of the young ones and the unthinkable happens to *your* bike, try to keep your head. Get off the bike, sit down for five minutes, do your best to stay calm. Your bike has quit, that's all. Not the first time in history. You don't have to shoot up your Sony, bust up your hair-dryer, gnaw your gold chains in despair.

Quite the contrary, think of it this way—you've made it at last. Welcome to the fraternity, bubba, we've been expecting you. And we're so glad you finally found yourself a real man's motorcycle, one that you *push.*

Give you eighty bucks for it. . . .

—Ted West

Thompson at Large

Tidings from a Twentieth

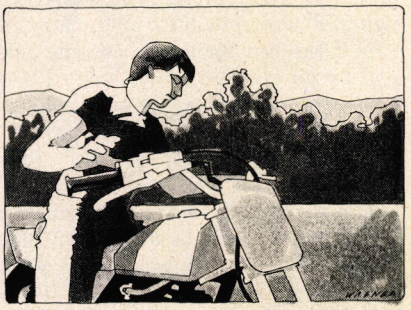
The revolution has started.

• If you ride much more than the 6.7 daily miles the Motorcycle Industry Council says represents the average American's average motorcycle trip length, you know all about the Road Mode. It's the state into which you slide more or less willy-nilly after the anxiety (from getting ready, getting started and getting on the road) ebbs. It's a state of easy contemplation, in which your mind (well, *my* mind, anyway) picks its own musings and delivers at random some very odd thoughts to your centers of consciousness.

Because my daily ride takes me 42 miles each way along the Maryland side of the Potomac River on some stunning two-lane roads, I slip into the Road Mode every day, and so not a ride goes by without the joker in command of my mental file cabinets releasing some rather strange notes to the brain centers that I otherwise use for more direct purposes, like keeping my Beemer rubber-side down. Last week, for instance, the file cabinet announced suddenly that the day marked my twentieth anniversary. Not of marriage, or of college graduation, but of riding motorcycles.

I've gotten used to these little flashes, but this one sort of startled me. I mean, *20* years? Seemed impossible. And then, of course, with this line of thought started, the joker in the file unleashed a fire hose of memories to back it all up, proving the point rather too efficiently. Annoyed, I shut off the memory tap. But not before a seemingly unrelated scene flashed through the closing door.

It was the week before. I was watching Andrew, my son, struggle to comply with his instructor's directions in the huge parking lot jammed with orange traffic cones, wobbling students and groaning starter-bikes, like the Honda CB125 Andrew rode. It was a typically blistering Washington day, and everybody sweated. Andrew was working his heart out, weaving here, stopping and starting there, generally doing well under the eagle eye of his teacher. During the 20 minutes I stood behind the chain-link fence and watched, he progressed markedly, gaining composure as the instructor rewarded his good moves and chided him for his bad ones. By the time his lesson ended, he was riding confidently. He beamed as he walked toward the car,



helmet and gloves in hand, excitedly recounting his triumphs and screw-ups on the course. I remember thinking that I was glad he had a good instructor, but little more. After all, that was what Motorcycle Safety Foundation riding courses were for, right?

Suddenly, as the scene faded, I realized why the 20-year notice had been juxtaposed with the MSF recollection. Among the other things that had happened during those years was nothing less than a revolution, with the power utterly to transform our riding lives.

The revolution was in the way we learned to ride. Or, more precisely, the way we *didn't* learn to ride. Twenty years ago, I learned by listening as Jim Childress, who owned a bike shop in California, patiently explained how everything worked on my YG1-K and then watched me fumble endlessly all afternoon on the little circle track behind his shop. It was a lousy way to learn—he knew it, I knew it, everybody knew it. But it was the way it had always been done. And, unfortunately, throughout the explosion of popularity of motorcycling that ensued through the Sixties and Seventies, it continued to be typical of the way we learned.

What changed it was a convergence of critical factors. These included a societal concern with safety (a concern that motorcyclists share, non-motorcyclist prejudices about "death wishes" notwithstanding), as well as sheer numbers, both of riders and the horrific accident/injury statistics. Married to economic incentives, these concerns were directed into action by the carrot of lower insurance premiums offered by the most courageous and far-sighted insurance carriers. And finally, enlightened bureaucrats in growing numbers and key positions made MSF courses accessible by allowing the use of "official" facilities for instruction. In short, people began to understand the widespread social benefit of real training. The result is that Andrew and his generation take for granted that they can learn to ride in a controlled, methodical manner.

This, friends, is the best thing that the last 20 years have seen. The mechanical developments in our machines have been nice, granted; likewise the progress in safety equipment. But nothing will change our lives the way this still-growing, as-yet largely unrecognized revolution in training will. Consider that ignorance is the biggest contributor to accidents among motorcyclists—a conclusion I come to not from institutional sources, but from personal observation—and then consider what training can do to the problem. Further, consider the effect of an accident/injury rate that accelerates downward over the years; first, there's the direct benefit of lower insurance costs. Then the indirect benefits: lower product-liability premiums built into our bikes, the resulting willingness to experiment with dramatic changes by the manufacturers, and, we can hope, the easing of the still-present widespread prejudices about bikes, mostly based on their "danger." Finally, Andrew and his colleagues, having learned to ride the right way, will, with any luck, accept "advanced" courses to hone their skills throughout their riding lives. The first tentative steps have been taken along these lines, again by the MSF, by its offering a "Better Biking" course, which is designed to refine streetwise techniques, define chassis- and rider-limits, and provide a motorcyclist who has a little experience with a deeper understanding of the physics of his sport. Better Biking is hardly the last word in advanced training, but that it exists at all is a triumph of the revolution.

This all adds up to something rather simple: better odds. Odds that are stacked in Andrew's favor that he, and the others sweating it out on the blistering learning lot, will survive to savor his own twentieth anniversary of discovering the Road Mode. And as any veteran knows, you can't ask for a happier anniversary than that. —*Steve Thompson*

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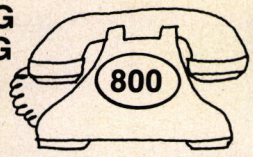

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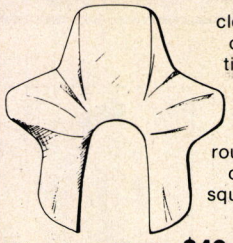

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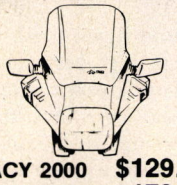

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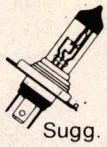

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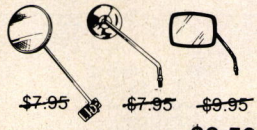

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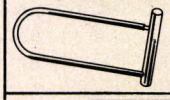

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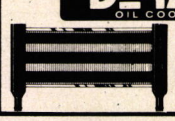

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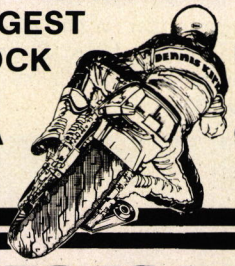

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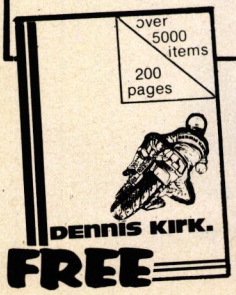

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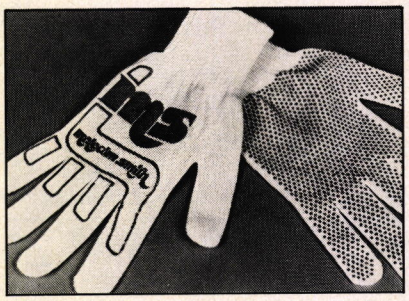
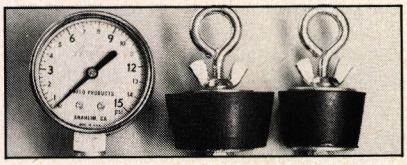


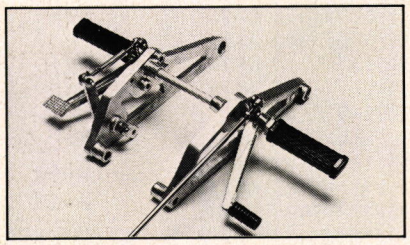
Grabby Hands: If you can't grasp the situation, maybe what you need is a pair of Grabber Gloves from Malcolm Smith. These cloth gloves have hundreds of small rubber pads on the fingers and palms, which Smith claims make it easy to pick up tools or to hold onto handgrips, even in the wet. The gloves are available in Medium and Large sizes, with red or blue graphics. The Grabber Gloves have a suggested retail price of $2.95, and are available from Malcolm Smith dealers. For more information on the gloves, contact Malcolm Smith Motorcycles, Dept. CG, 7563 Indiana Avenue, Riverside, California 92504.

New Jersey: What's better than a week's vacation in Newark? How about a Cool-Lite jersey from O'Neal USA? O'Neal claims Cool-Lite jerseys and riding pants offer all the safety of regular dirt-riding gear, but are made in light colors to reflect the sun's heat. The combination of 50/50 cotton/polyester and designed-in vents keep things cool. Jerseys are available in sizes S, M, L, and XL for $16.95, in white or yellow. Pants include leather knee-pads and removable hip-pads and knee/shin guards, and are offered in sizes 28-36 for $99.95. For more information on O'Neal products, write O'Neal USA, Dept. CG, 9555 Owensmouth Ave., Chatsworth, California 91311.

Under Pressure: If you think the horsepower in that high-performance two-stroke is whistling past the crank seals, check those seals with a two-stroke leakdown tester from B&D Engineering. These kits include a gauge assembly for the intake port and an expandable plug for the exhaust port that allow you to seal the engine for pressure-testing. B&D claims the kits can be used to test any engine equipped with a 26mm-to-44mm Mikuni, Bing or Keihin carburetor. Models are available to fit specific carburetor sizes for a suggested retail price of $24.95. A special service-department model, which includes all the adaptors needed to fit any carburetor-mount from 26mm-to-44mm, is available for $39.95. For further information on the pressure-tester, write B&D Engineering, Dept. CG, 906 North Towner, Santa Ana, California 92703.



Freddie Fakes: Or Roberts replicas, if you prefer. Whichever, Quadrifoglio now imports "replica leathers" T-shirts to assist in your impersonation of famous GP racers. These 100 percent cotton shirts feature the names, numbers, team logos, sponsor patches, zipper and stitching of the leathers of notable racers printed in full color. Replica leathers in stock include those of Roberts, Spencer, Mamola and Hailwood; others available on special order. Suggested retail price for each shirt is $16, plus $3 handling per order. For more information on the T-shirts, contact Quadrifoglio Inc., Dept. CG, 5745 N. 11th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85014.



Permanent Setback: If you'd like to be able to put your best foot backward, you might consider a set of Raask rearsets from Novella, Ltd. Novella claims the rearsets are bolt-on kits that include rubber-covered pegs, shift and brake levers, mounting plates and all the necessary hardware. Optional folding pegs are available for an additional $15. The Interceptor kit shown moves the footpeg position back 9 inches, and has a suggested retail price of $169. Raask makes rearset kits to fit more than 140 Japanese and European motorcycles. The kits sell for $149-$169, depending on model. For more information on Raask rearsets, write Dave Pagel, Novella, Ltd., Dept. CG, 826 Coolidge Avenue, Palatine, Illinois 60067.

Stepping From Track To Street: After giving riders the Fast Lane around the track, Bates has now introduced a line of Fast Lane boots for touring riders. Bates claims that the new touring boots are top-grain leather and feature a fully cushioned inner sole, a full-length rear zipper and oil- and slip-resistant rubber soles. Fast Lane Touring Boots are available in black, brown, chocolate and tan in full and half sizes 8-12. Suggested retail price for the Touring Boots is $115, although custom-sizing and additional colors are available at extra cost. For more information on the boots, contact Bates Industries, Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 240-P, Long Beach, California 90801.

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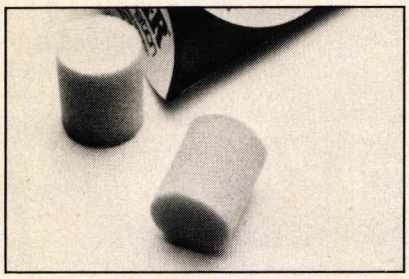
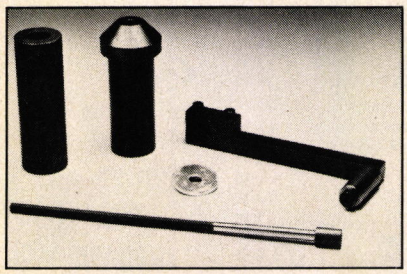
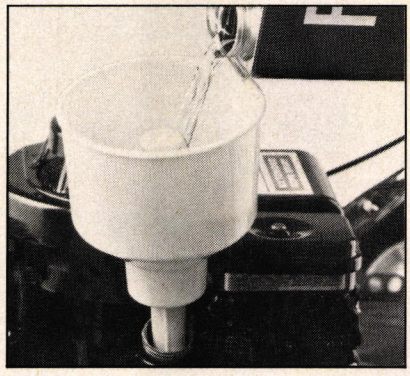


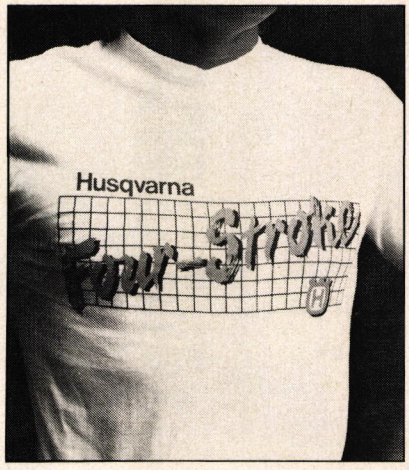
Say What? Ear What?: You don't have to put a banana in your ear to protect your hearing from damage caused by wind roar or exhaust noise. Instead, you could use a set of E-A-R Plugs from Ascot Marketing Inc. Ascot claims these soft, closed-cell-foam plugs conform to the shape of the ear canal for protection from the potentially damaging effects of loud noises. Model 100 E-A-R plugs are available in a 20-pair package for $9.95, or $5.95 per five-pair package, plus $1.95 for postage and handling (Massachussets residents add 5 percent sales tax). To order, or for more information, write: Mr. Prescott, Ascot Marketing Inc., Dept. CG, 99 Main Street, Bolton, Massachusetts 01740.

Manley Job: Using brute force with a hammer and punch is one way to install new valve guides, but if you'd rather use finesse you might try a new valve-guide installer from Manley Performance Products. The valve-guide tool is designed for use with all Kawasaki 900cc and 1000cc engines and the Suzuki GS1000. Manley claims the tool provides easy valve-guide installation without risking damage to the heads, and that the new guides are concentric to within a few thousandths of an inch. The valve-guide installer has a suggested retail price of $88, and is available from Manley Performance Products, Dept. CG, 13 Race Street, Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003.

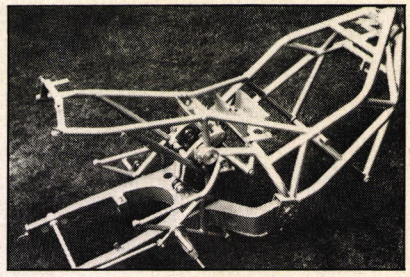


Filtering Fuel Funnel: Filtering gasoline is no strain with a Fuel Separator Funnel from Research Energy of Ohio. REO claims this two-piece plastic funnel and strainer/separator can flow up to four gallons of fuel per minute, and can remove 99 percent of the water in gasoline while screening out particles as small as 0.005 inch. Suggested retail price for the Fuel Separator Funnel is $5.95. For further information on the funnel, write Research Energy of Ohio, Inc., Dept. CG, 431 Shearer Blvd., Cocoa, Florida 32922.



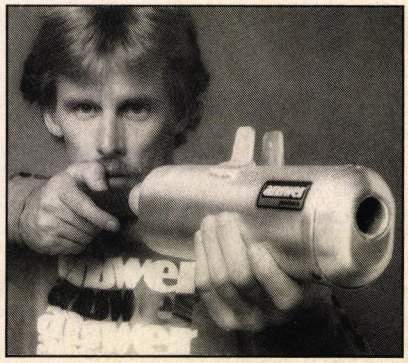


Thumpthing To Wear: Husqvarna thumper fans can now pledge their allegiance to the new Husky four-stroke with shirts available from Husky Products. These white, all-cotton T-shirts have a three-color Husky four-stroke logo on the front, and are available in Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large sizes. Suggested retail price for the shirts is $8.95, and they are available from any authorized Husqvarna dealer.



Custom Framing: You could hang it on the wall, but you'd probably rather wrap it around a Laverda engine. Slater Brothers now has a frame kit for Laverda triples that features an adjustable link-type rear suspension with a single, Koni shock. The kit uses tapered-roller bearings for the swingarm and steering head, and includes a four-bearing mount for the swingarm pivot. The frame kit includes a new seat and tank; Slater Brothers claims that all other parts from the Laverda triple will fit. Suggested retail price for the frame is $3500. For more information on the Laverda frame, write Slater Bros. USA Ltd., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 746, Kenwood, California 95452.

Don't Shoot: An armed getaway isn't the way to outrun the competition on a motocross track, but an Answer Equalizer just might be. These aluminum mufflers reportedly are available for all 1983 motocrossers, and the manufacturer claims the Equalizers are completely rebuildable and offer improved flow and more tire clearance than stock exhausts. Suggested retail prices for the Equalizer Oval Mufflers range from $54.95-$56.95. For more information on the Equalizer, contact Answer Products, Dept. CG, 27967 Beale Ct., Valencia, California 91355.



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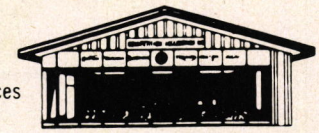

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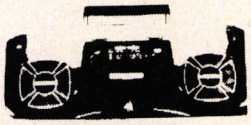

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CYCLE GUIDE
LAVERDA

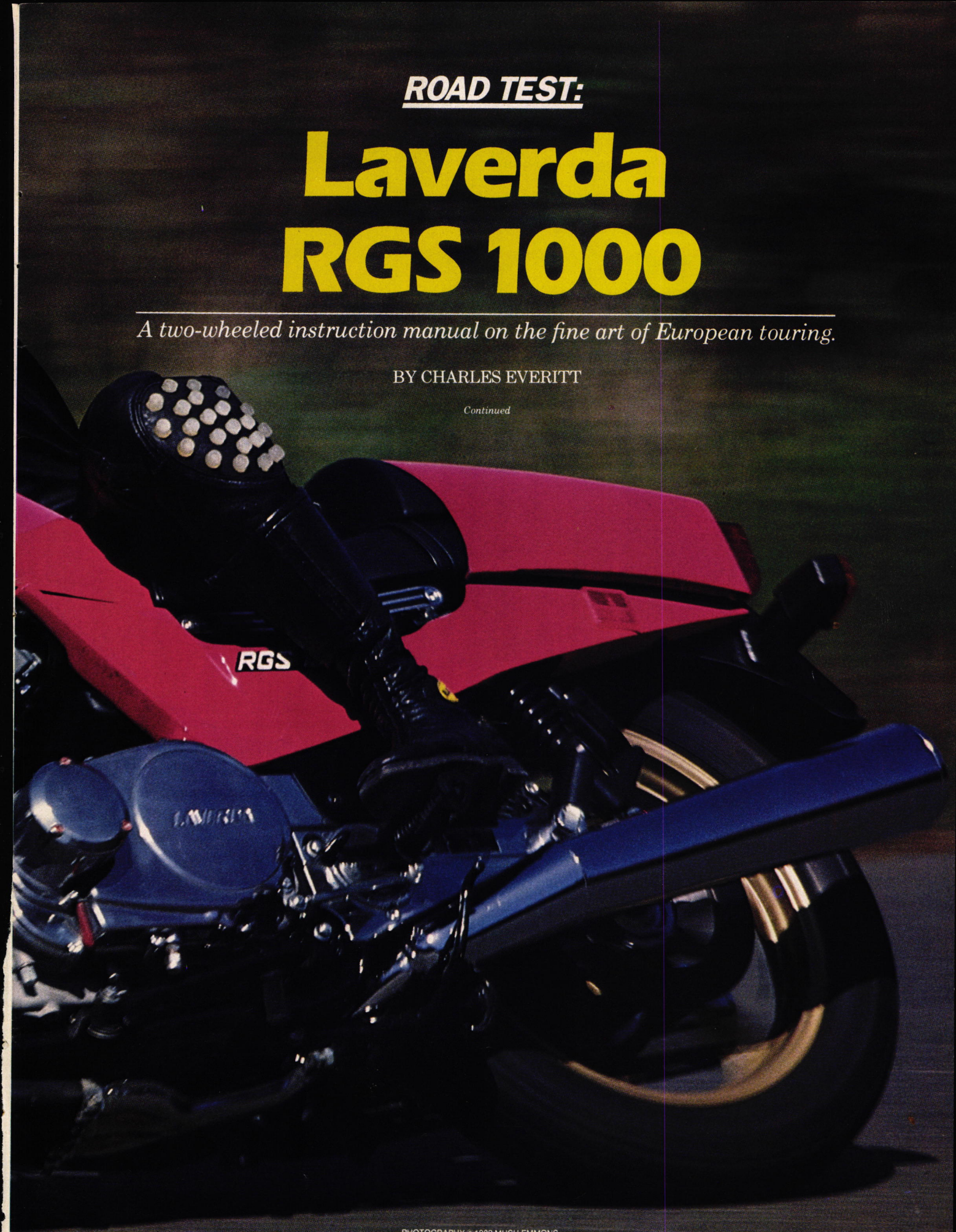
ROAD TEST:

Laverda RGS 1000

A two-wheeled instruction manual on the fine art of European touring.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

Continued



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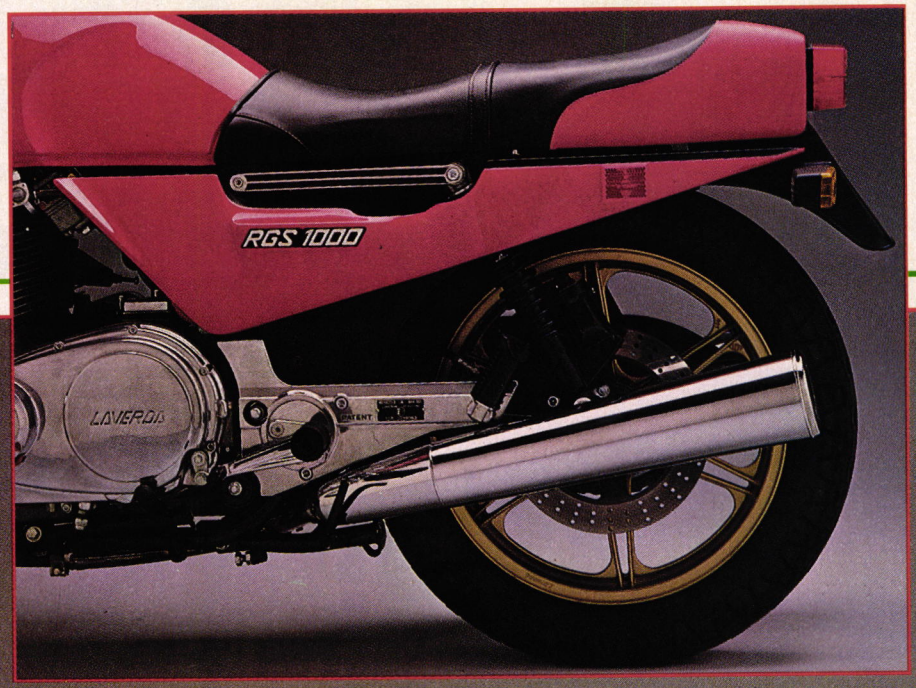
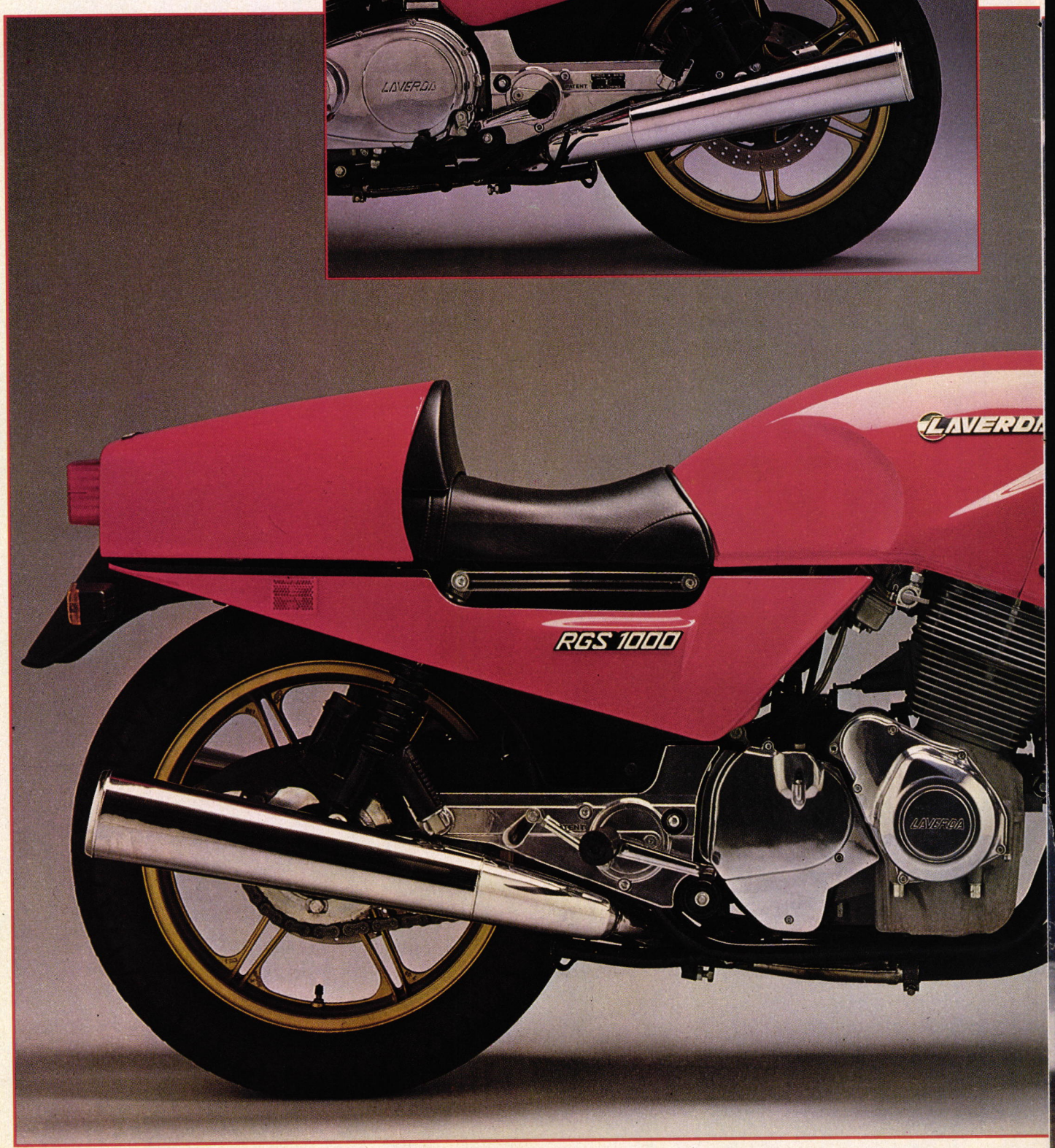
Let's talk about touring. No, no, hold on—not touring on 600-to-900-pound motorcycles filled to the gunwales with entertainment centers, digital readouts and enough carrying capacity to outfit a family of three for a week. That's touring in the American idiom. Instead, let the touring image take on a European flavor, where speed limits are more hon-





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ored in the breach than in the observance, and where the journey itself assumes more importance than the destination.

Within that scenario, Laverda's RGS 1000 has few peers. It's a motorcycle that urges you to ride everywhere at 100 mph, making a mockery of every posted speed limit in the country, while its utter stability engenders a feeling of confidence and security at such superlegal speeds. To ride the RGS in that fashion is to understand the very essence of sport-touring.

The RGS isn't just a rolling testimonial to the virtues of Euro-style traveling. It's also the embodiment of Laverda's awareness of what it takes to sell motorcycles in this country. Italy's Moto Laverda has gone to great lengths to make the RGS quiet and to imbue it with a fresh sense of civility more in keeping with American tastes than previous Laverdas. Not that Laverda really needs to make concessions to Yankees, or even to sell boatloads of motorcycles, for that matter; the firm's motorcycle division comprises only a fraction of the Laverda concern, which

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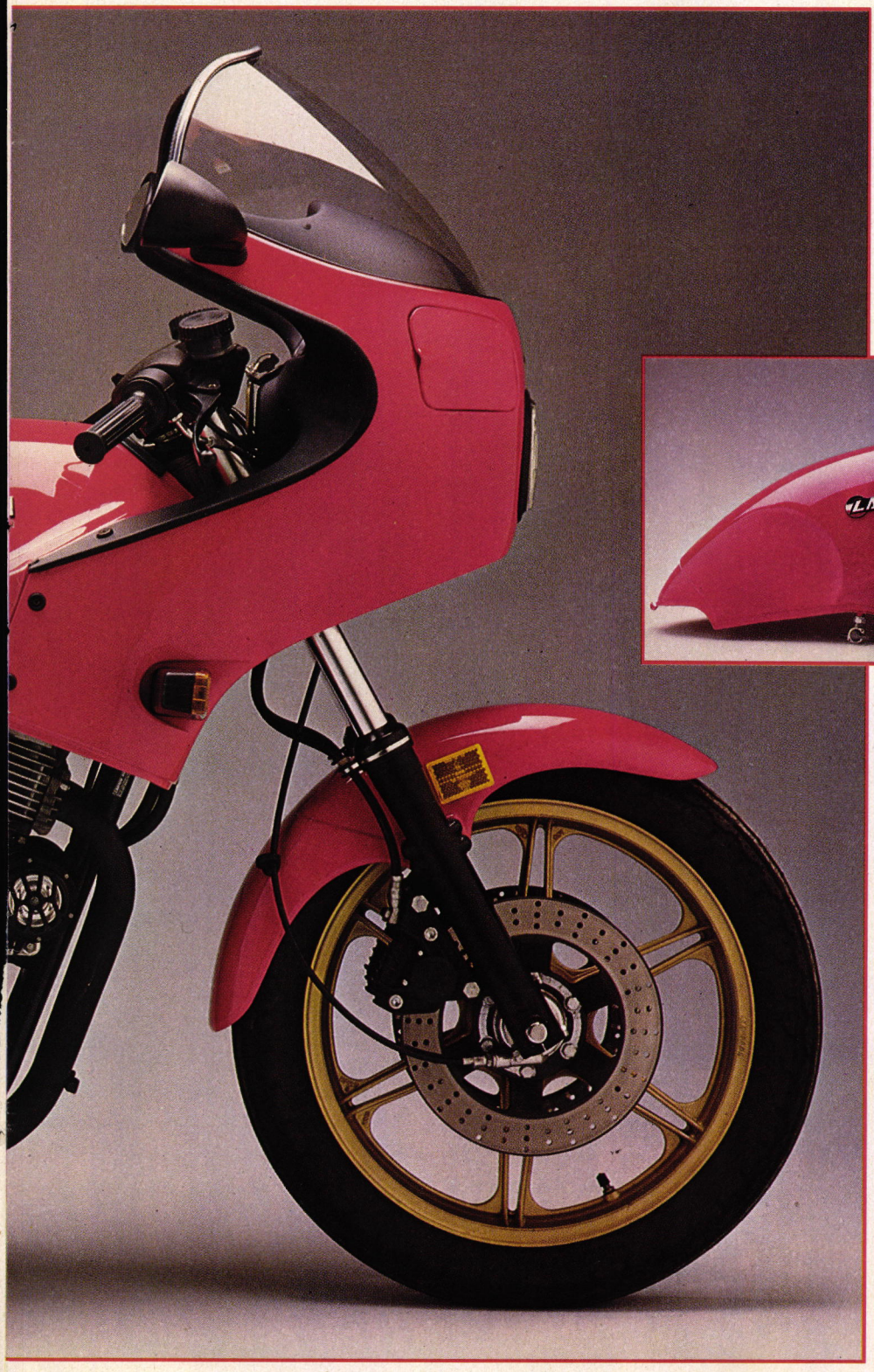

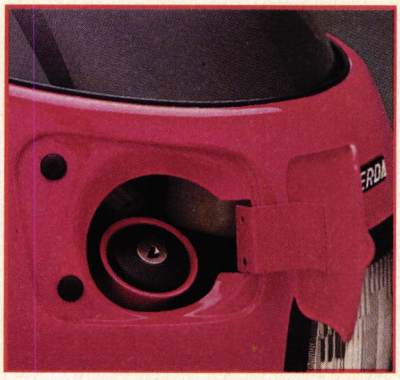

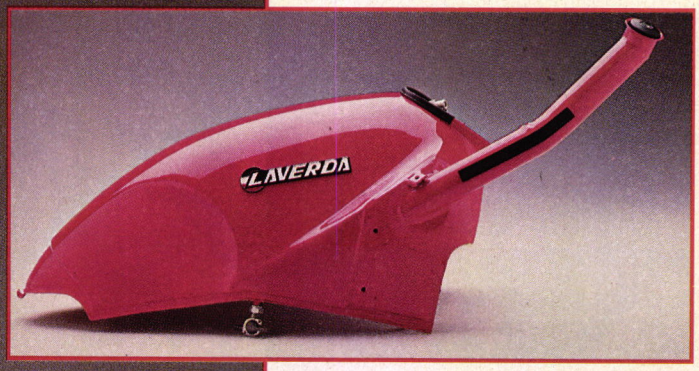

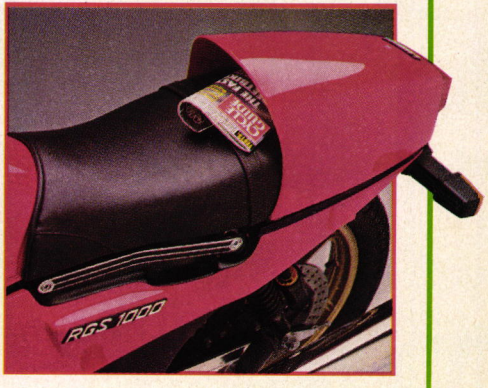

concentrates on making profits from the manufacture of farm equipment—not motorcycles. Laverda's owners, Piero and Massimo Laverda, work out of the motorcycle division, and appoint managers to run the rest of the company. They do so because they are passionately involved in motorcycling, and their lack of reliance on selling motorcycles for profits allows them a certain amount of design freedom.

An enviable situation, but one that didn't sell many motorcycles in this country. It was time, the Laverdas decided, to build a more refined motorcycle with a broader appeal for the American market; to knock off some of the rough edges, as it were.

The result of that decision is the RGS 1000; but while the RGS presents a more refined character than previous Laverdas in terms of smoothness, noise control and power delivery, there's nothing soft about it. Despite the changes, the RGS still is, in some ways, a crude device; the substantial-looking, sand-cast engine cases, high-effort controls and firm ride attest to that. The bike's European nature hasn't been significantly dulled and it remains a traditional Laverda.

A redesigned frame for the RGS attempts to break from the Laverda tradi-

Riding the RGS—at high speeds—counts as full credit in Euro-style Sport-Touring 101

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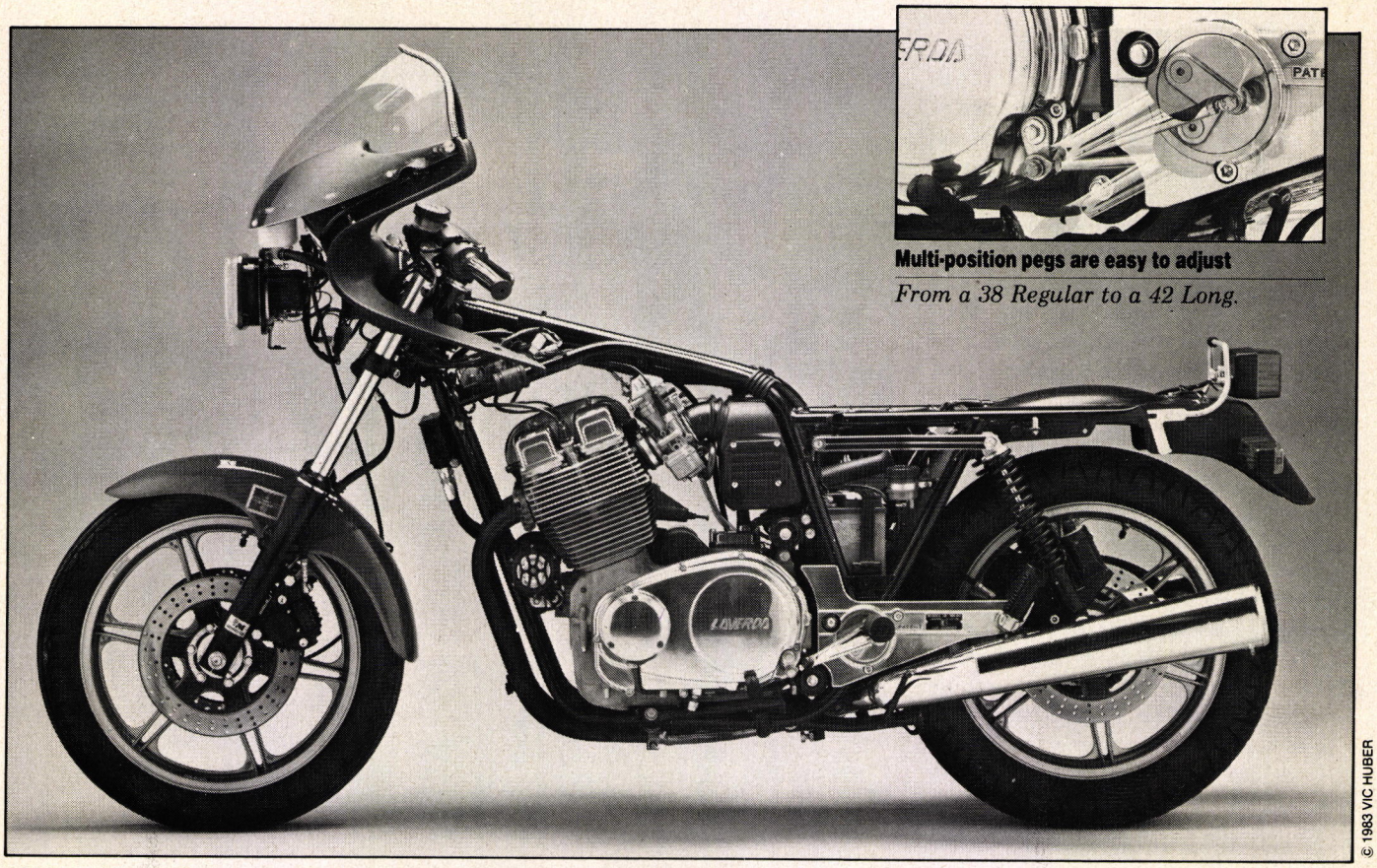

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RGS has a longer wheelbase, one more degree of steering-head angle and 15mm more trail than '83 Laverdas

It all adds up to confidence-inspiring stability when you're traveling at scofflaw speeds.

tion of tall seat heights, however. The saddle is 31.1 inches from the ground, a figure in keeping with the seat heights of other literbikes. Nonetheless, the tall, double-overhead-cam, three-cylinder engine and a new fairing put the bike's center of gravity too high to make the RGS nimble at walking speeds. The bike feels tall and top-heavy, especially when the rider is trying to horse its 556 pounds around in a garage or parking lot.

The RGS's frame differs from those of past Laverdas in other ways, as well. The backbone tubes have been reconfigured to allow easier top-end access, and the swingarm is now made of box-section tubing in place of round-section tubing. More importantly, though, the wheelbase and steering geometry were chosen to enhance the bike's stability at high speeds. Consequently, the RGS's wheelbase was stretched out more than an inch, compared to the Jota and Mirage of last year, the previous 28-degree steering-head angle was kicked out to 29 degrees and trail was increased from 110mm to 125mm.

And the RGS 1000 certainly is stable. The bike doesn't begin to feel at home until the speedometer is edging toward the 100-mph mark, and then everything seems to fall into place. At those speeds, the RGS feels as if it were locked onto the pavement. It's an exhilarating motorcycle to ride fast through the countryside; not the scary kind of exhilaration that comes from wondering what the motorcycle is going to do next, but the kind that stems from the confidence provided by a motorcycle that feels safe and secure as you lean it into sweeping bends at triple-digit speeds.

But once you take the RGS 1000 out of its high-speed element, the magic begins to fade. Although we never dragged anything on the right, the centerstand tang on the left did touch down—hard—though only when the RGS was rushed through corners by a 190-pound tester. And the bike's Gibraltar-like stability translates into slow, heavy steering, requiring forceful inputs from the rider. The bike is difficult to herd through quick left-right transitions, and initiating turns must be done early. Once the desired line is chosen, the RGS's innate stability keeps it there, and changing lines in mid-turn almost requires intervention from the Vatican. Cooking along tight, twisty backroads quickly wears the rider down, and isn't the RGS's forte.

Sport-touring *is* the RGS 1000's forte, though; and just as it is important to understand the distinction between American and Euro-style touring, so is it important to draw the line between sport-touring and full-on sport riding. Most riders couldn't travel all day at a 9-to-10/10ths pace without feeling wilted at day's end. Sport-touring, on the other hand, demands a less-strenuous pace, something along the lines of 7-to-8/10ths, which is more in keeping with the RGS's character. You can use the bike's high-speed abilities and nerve-calming stability to cover mile after mile, quickly and comfortably, and step off relatively refreshed, even after a full day's ride.

Touring—American *or* Euro-style—places certain demands on the engine, too, such as smoothness, a non-abrupt power delivery and a low level of mechanical noise, so Laverda reworked its venerable triple to make it more amenable to touring duty. Previous Laverda triples had 180-degree crankshafts, with the outer two pistons moving up and down together, firing alternately, and the center crankpin spaced 180 degrees from the other two. Now, however, Laverda uses a 120-degree crankshaft, because its evenly spaced firing order produces a smoother power delivery, and, according to Laverda's American importer, makes the triple easier to keep quiet while letting it rev more easily. In terms of vibration control, though, neither crankshaft configuration is clearly

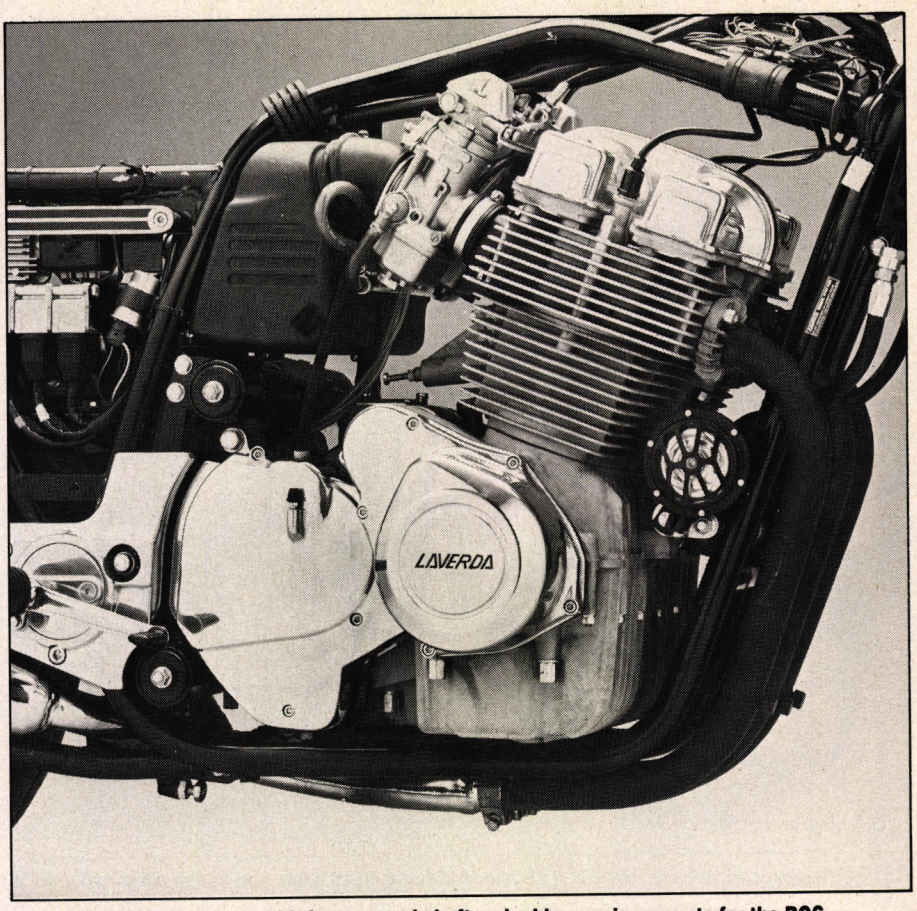
Continued

superior. A 180 crank virtually eliminates the rocking-couple that a 120 crank will cause, but has considerably more primary and secondary imbalance; a 120 crank offers better primary and secondary balance, but allows a greater rocking-couple. So, the RGS uses rubber engine-mounts to help quell vibration. Other changes associated with the new crankshaft are both stronger crank-supports and main bearings, and a third coil and set of ignition pickups (the 180-degree triple used just one coil and one set of pickups to fire both outside cylinders).

Much of the rest of the work done on the 981cc powerplant was in the interest of reducing noise rather than increasing performance. For instance, past Laverda triples had their crankshaft's right end and mainshaft's left end supported by a bearing located in their respective case covers. But that allowed the covers to transmit too much engine noise, so those bearings on the RGS are carried in outriggers bolted to the center cases. To further reduce noise, the gearbox's roller bearings have closer tolerances, and two single-row chains replace the triplex primary drive chain.

Not all of the changes were noise-related, though. The RGS's airbox does help silence the engine's intake roar, but it also flows more air than the 180-degree engine's airbox. The new motor also has shallower combustion chambers and flatter-top pistons, yielding a compression ratio that is down to 8.8:1 from 9.3:1 on the previous triple. In addition, the gearbox's first three ratios are lower (higher numerically) than before, and the shifting mechanism has been redesigned.

Nonetheless, Laverda's carefully massaged 15-year-old triple still is better-suited to life in the fast lane than it is to life in the city. In town, the rider will be acutely aware of the hydraulically actuated clutch's extraordinarily stiff pull and the clunky-shifting gearbox's long lever-throw. He'll also notice the engine's jerky response at low engine speeds,



Laverda's powerplant got a 120 degree crankshaft and rubber engine-mounts for the RGS

Attempting to tame the big triple.

which seems to be a function of the ignition's abrupt advance at about 1800 rpm.

Revving past 1800 rpm sidesteps that trait, though, and lets you experience the engine's smooth delivery of power, which starts building as soon as you crack the throttle open. The triple pulls hardest from 6000 rpm, and spins easily past its 7500-rpm redline without feeling tight or breathless. The wide spread of power allows a choice of two or three gears for fast cornering; just select a higher gear and use the motor's strong midrange, or downshift to get to the high-rpm power. Our Laverda was an early production unit and later bikes are expected to have two more teeth on their rear sprockets. That change won't dramatically alter the engine's agreeable nature, though, or make it any less suitable as a sport-touring powerplant. As it stands, the engine's tractability and low level of mechanical clatter suit the RGS's role.

Besides engine performance, comfort is another area where American and European touring idioms blend together. And the RGS accommodates its pilot quite nicely—at speed. The saddle, which at first appears to be board-hard, and about as inviting as an anvil for long stays, spreads outward slightly to meet the sloping curves of the gas tank, allow-

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	12.565/106.50	130	556	140
Honda CB1100F-'83	11.224/119.84	144†	550	135
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	12.093/111.66	137†	538	124
Yamaha XJ900 Seca-'83	11.949/113.20	128	499	135
BMW R100RT-'82	13.862/95.13	126†	523	148
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	11.203/119.30	141†	530	132

† indicates a calculated top speed

ing the rider to support his weight somewhat on his thighs. There's a moderately long reach to the short, turn-down clip-on handlebars, a position that leaves the rider bent at the waist with most of his upper-body weight on his hands and wrists. That position is no problem if he's going fast, but becomes one at double-nickel speeds, and might make him wish for Laverda's optional higher-handlebar kit, which includes all the necessary hoses, cables and hardware to make the swap. Past approximately 75 mph, enough wind spills around the edges of the frame-mounted fairing and hits the rider's chest to provide some extra support for his wrists. So, in concert, the fairing, the riding postion and the saddle's good support allow all-day rides in comfort—but only at speed.

RG Studio of Italy, the RGS's namesake, designed the fairing, which punches a neat hole in the wind and offers good weather-protection for the rider's torso. There's some wind roar from the air passing over the windscreen, but no buffeting. The RG Studio also is responsible for an optional set of luggage, the RGS's smooth-top gas tank with its filler located behind a door in the fairing, and a cleverly designed cowling built into the saddle. The cowling can be installed or removed with surprising ease and, in place, lets the rider brace himself against the padded butt-rest. Removing the pad gives access to a small storage space.

There's more ingenious thinking in the RGS's adjustable footpegs. The pegs thread into circular plates that fit into carriers bolted to the frame. Loosening an Allen bolt and a locknut on the peg allows the peg/plate assembly to be rotated, which provides approximately 2 inches of adjustment, vertically and horizontally. The shift lever and rear brake pedal operate through Heim-jointed, threaded-rod linkages, and getting the full range of adjustment requires swapping the threaded rods. It's a convenient, easily adjusted system that makes you wonder why no one thought of it before.

Apart from the pegs' adjustability, you'll also notice them for the vibration they transmit at certain rpm. Laverda made the rubber engine-mounts virtually solid to prevent the motor from moving about too much in the frame, a tactic that short-circuited the mounts' effectiveness in controlling vibration. Consequently, much of the engine's shaking gets transmitted directly to the rider through the pegs and the handlebars, most noticeably between 3250 and 4500 rpm, which corresponds to 55-to-75 mph in top gear. Cruising at legal speeds and slightly beyond produces a hand-numbing, high-amplitude/low-frequency rumbling at the grips. Turn up the wick, though, to get the engine spinning at five grand or higher, and the RGS smooths out nicely. It's just one more incentive to ride in sport-touring mode.

There are other incentives to ride the RGS 1000 at a fast clip, among them the bike's suspension. The Italian Marzocchi fork and shocks take some of the jolts out of sharp, abrupt paving irregularities, but fairly ignore the moderate stuff, and overall deliver a harsh ride. The suspension works best at high speeds, but the rear springs are too stiff to provide a truly comfortable ride on anything but smooth pavement. And the shocks' rebound damping begins to fade on long rides, which then reveals a slight rear-end wallow in fast, bumpy turns.

The Brembo disc brakes are another Italian-made system whose performance is out of keeping with the RGS's high-speed character. There's plenty of pure stopping power available from the triple-disc setup, but extremely high lever-pressures are required. And while the front brakes provide good feedback right to lock-up, at that point they become difficult to modulate accurately. In addition, the rear brake is insensitive and lacks feel. Panic stops from 60 mph also uncover a disconcerting tendency for both ends of the bike to wobble slightly during the last one-third of the stop.

There still are a few rough edges, then, to be smoothed on Laverda's big triple. Despite the factory's attempts to civilize it for American consumption, the RGS hasn't been sanitized for your protection and remains European to the core. That also means the bike's sport-touring capabilities haven't been compromised, even though the sheer speed this motorcycle needs to feel at home flies in the face of 55-mph reality in America.

And it's that raw appetite for triple-digit speeds that makes up the Laverda's greatest shortcoming; the vibration and stiff-legged suspension are merely related symptoms. Conversely, it's the same competence at speed that makes the RGS such a success as a European sport-tourer. This isn't Europe, though, and an RGS in America could go through life without ever once using its full potential. As Americanized as the RGS 1000's designers intended it to be, the bike still is a narrow-spectrum motorcycle. But it's also the hard-traveler's first-class, express ticket for when the journey is more important than the destination. •

Ride Review

• To me, it's a matter of mathematics: The RGS 1000 does one thing (sport touring at triple-digit speeds) maybe 10 percent better than anything I've ever ridden; but that kind of pure-European riding comprises no more than about one percent of my overall time on two wheels. On top of that, the Laverda does every other type of riding—which accounts for the remaining 99 percent of my usage—only 75 to 80 percent as well as most other literbikes. And when I add up all those numbers on my moto-calculator, the bottom line tells me that I have to give up way too much to gain far too little.

In all fairness, I must admit that the Laverda is a superb motorcycle—in its element. The problem is that its element is not America, the land of the free—and the home of the radar-enforced 55-mph backroad speed limit. —*Paul Dean*

• It's essential to keep in mind that bikes such as the Laverda RGS1000 are *specialty* bikes. They're generally good for one type of riding only.

And in the case of the RGS1000, its specialty is high-speed riding. Because when the speedometer needle sweeps past the 80-mph mark, magic takes place: The engine's vibration disappears, and the mirrors suddenly show what's behind you. And with 130-mph top speed, there can be plenty back there.

I say that high-speed riding is the bike's only virtue, because the RGS steers slowly at low speeds, its suspension is underdamped, and the styling is too gaudy. After all, chrome mufflers went out with the Honda CB750F. And specialty bikes, such as the Laverda RGS1000, should at least *look* high-zoot. —*Dain Gingerelli*

• A ride around the block on a Laverda RGS will leave you wondering why the Italians made such a strange motorcycle. At low speeds, the big triple has all the grace and creature comfort of a ¾-ton pickup. The clutch is stiff, the shifting is clunky and the suspension is harsh.

But one high-speed run with the Laverda will make you wonder why everyone doesn't build something like the RGS; the faster it goes, the better it works. This is a motorcycle that doesn't feel right at anything near legal speeds. The Laverda is the first bike I've ever ridden that made me wish I lived in Europe, because operating the RGS anywhere speed limits are rigidly enforced—not simply 55, but 70 or even 80—poses a definite risk to my driver's license. No, if I owned an RGS, I'd like an apartment in Munich and a job in Berlin—and I'd sleep late. —*Jim Miller*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Laverda RGS 1000 — street

IMPORTER: Slater Brothers Inc., P.O. Box 746, Kenwood, California 95452

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $5950

ENGINE

Type . . . . . four-stroke transverse vertical triple
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke . . . . . 75.0mm x 74.0mm
Displacement 980.8cc
Compression ratio 8.8:1
Engine redline . . . . . 7500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . three 32mm Dell'Orto slide/needle with accelerator pumps
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 210-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 24-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . double-row chain; 2.040:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #630 O-ring chain (3/4-in. pitch, 3/8-in. width); 2.125:1 (43/16) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	3.036	13.161	5.72
II	2.050	8.887	8.47
III	1.486	6.442	11.68
IV	1.173	5.085	14.80
V	1.000	4.335	17.36

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Marzocchi, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/5.2 in. (133mm)
Rear . . . . . dual Marzocchi shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/4.7 in. (118mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 10.9-in. (276mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.9-in. (278mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 100/90V18 Pirelli MT29 Phantom +1
Rear . . . . . 120/90V18 Pirelli MT28 Phantom +1

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

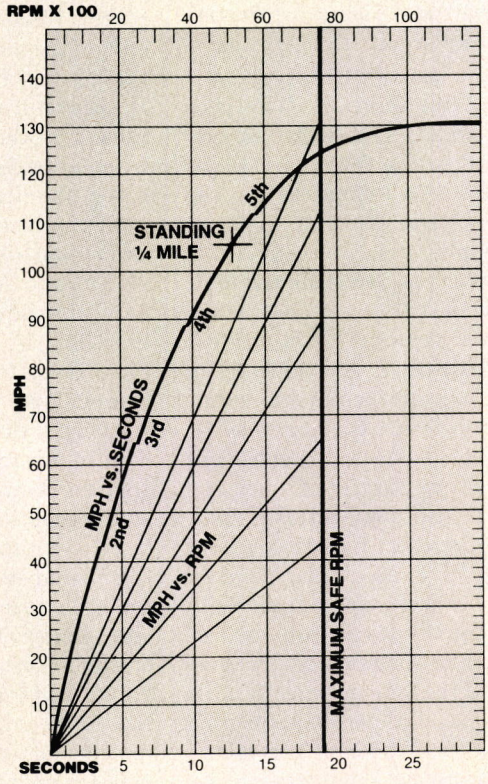
Weight . . . . . 556 lbs. (252.2kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 46.2% front, 53.8% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 970 lbs. (440kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 379 lbs. (172kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 59.2 to 60.4 in. (1504 to 1533mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.1 in. (790mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 24.4 in. (620mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . adjustable from 13.5 to 15.5 in. (342 to 394mm)
Ground clearance . . . 5.4 in. (136mm), at header-pipe clamp
Steering head angle . . . . . 29.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.92 in. (125mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.7 qt. (3.5*l*)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.7 gal. (21.5*l*), including 0.7 gal. (2.5*l*) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, oil temperature gauge, fuel gauge,

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 25 to 40 mpg (11 to 17 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 33 mpg (14 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 143 to 228 miles (230 to 367km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . 18 to 28 miles (29 to 45km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 54 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.565 sec., 106.50 mph (171 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 130 mph (209 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 30 ft. (9.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 140 ft. (42.7m)

WARRANTY: 6 months, 6000 miles

AVAILABLE COLORS: Red or Silver



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

GEARING UP:

CYCLE GUIDE'S TOURING COLLECTION

When you care enough to want the very best.

BY JIM MILLER

Touring has no universal definition. For the traditional American-style rider, touring could be a leisurely cruise across four states astride a full-dress heavyweight laden with all the comforts of home. For European-style riders, though, touring might be a high-speed blitz down a twisting two-lane aboard a thoroughbred sportbike stripped right down to its bare essentials.

The two touring styles appear to have little more in common than the number of wheels involved and the number of miles traveled. Each has its own priorities, because the two riding styles evolved from distinct points of view toward motorcycle travel. One emphasizes armchair comfort; the other, grace at speed.

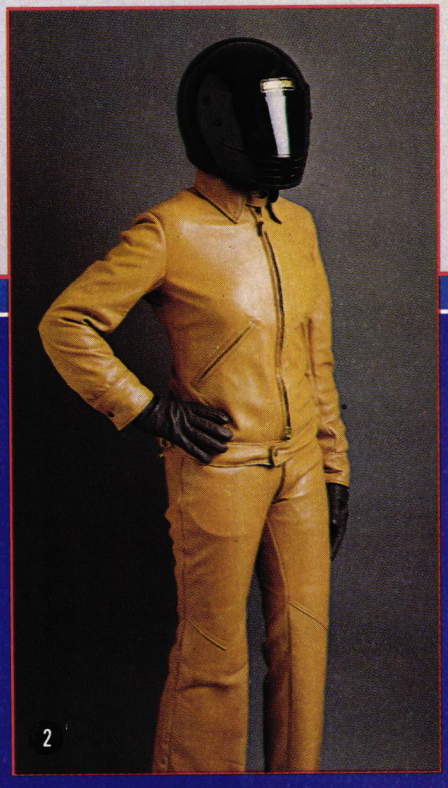
Yet, there is common ground. In both cases, the motorcycle is not simply a means of transportation; it is the *reason* to travel. When touring, the trip itself, not the destination, is the important factor. This point of view requires excellence in touring equipment, because the first function of any item worth its space on the motorcycle is to enhance the tour. While there are any number of items that fulfill this requirement, some do it better than any others. For one reason or another, these are the items considered to be the best—the equipment for which no excuse is made, because none is required.

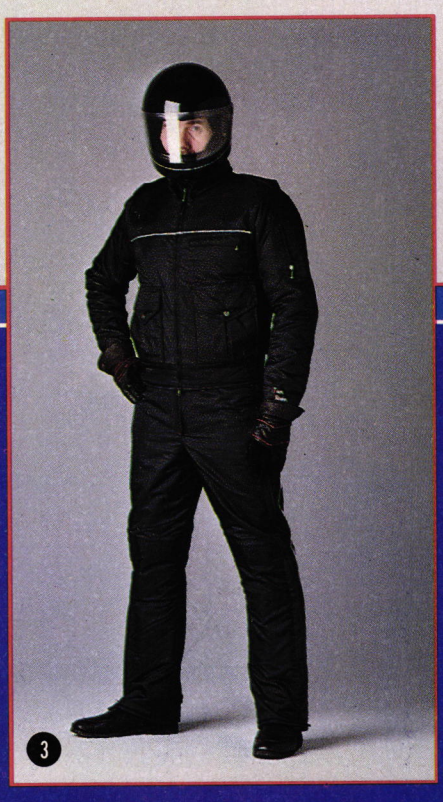
The selection of that class of touring equipment has never been better. A combination of a traditionally strong interest in American-style touring and an increasing interest in European-style touring has produced an outstanding variety of first-class equipment for both touring tastes. With that in mind, we have assembled this touring wishbook; a collection of some of the best items in touring equipment available today, one set for American-style touring and another for the European-style riders. These are the pieces we would put near the top of a packing list for a coast-to-coast tour, whether by Interstate or secondary road. There are none better.

Continued

The American Tour

The Harley-Davidson FLHT Classic ($8599) is appropriately named—it's a classic American-style heavyweight tourer. The FLHT, like all 1984 Harleys with Evolution V2 engines, has a substantial increase in horsepower and torque over previous, Shovelhead-equipped bikes, which enhances its ability to carry a rider, passenger and all their gear coast-to-coast. And since customizing is as American as Harley itself, this particular model includes a CYCLE GUIDE-designed custom paint job, done through Harley's custom-paint program. The program allows you to design—at additional cost—your own paint scheme. The FLHT Classic and custom paint (Harley's custom-paint program currently excludes fiberglass items) are available from Harley-Davidson dealers.





(1) MAC Magnum glasses ($59.95, or $99.90 with prescription lenses) have aluminum wrap-around frames and lightweight plastic photo-sensitive lenses to protect your eyes from sun and wind. Magnums are available from MAC Products, 1410 Gaylord St., Long Beach, California 90813. (2) Thurlow deerskin leathers (jacket, $259; pants, $239; gloves, $48) are some of the softest, most comfortable leathers you'll ever find. The leathers are available from Thurlow Leatherworld, 4807 Mercury St. #E, San Diego, California 92111. (3) Tour Rider riding suit (jacket, $99.95; overalls, $99.95) provides excellent protection for cold-weather tours. This suit also has Early Warning reflective striping to improve your visibility to others. Other Tour Rider garments are available entirely in Early Warning material. Tour Rider products are available

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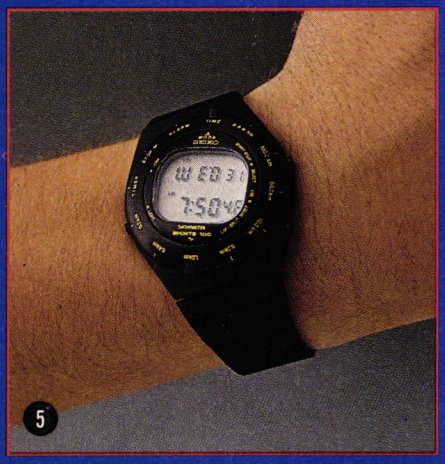
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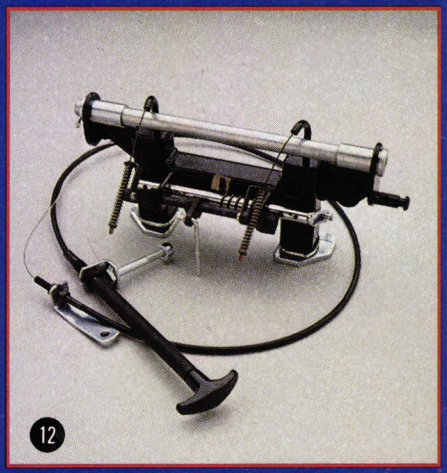
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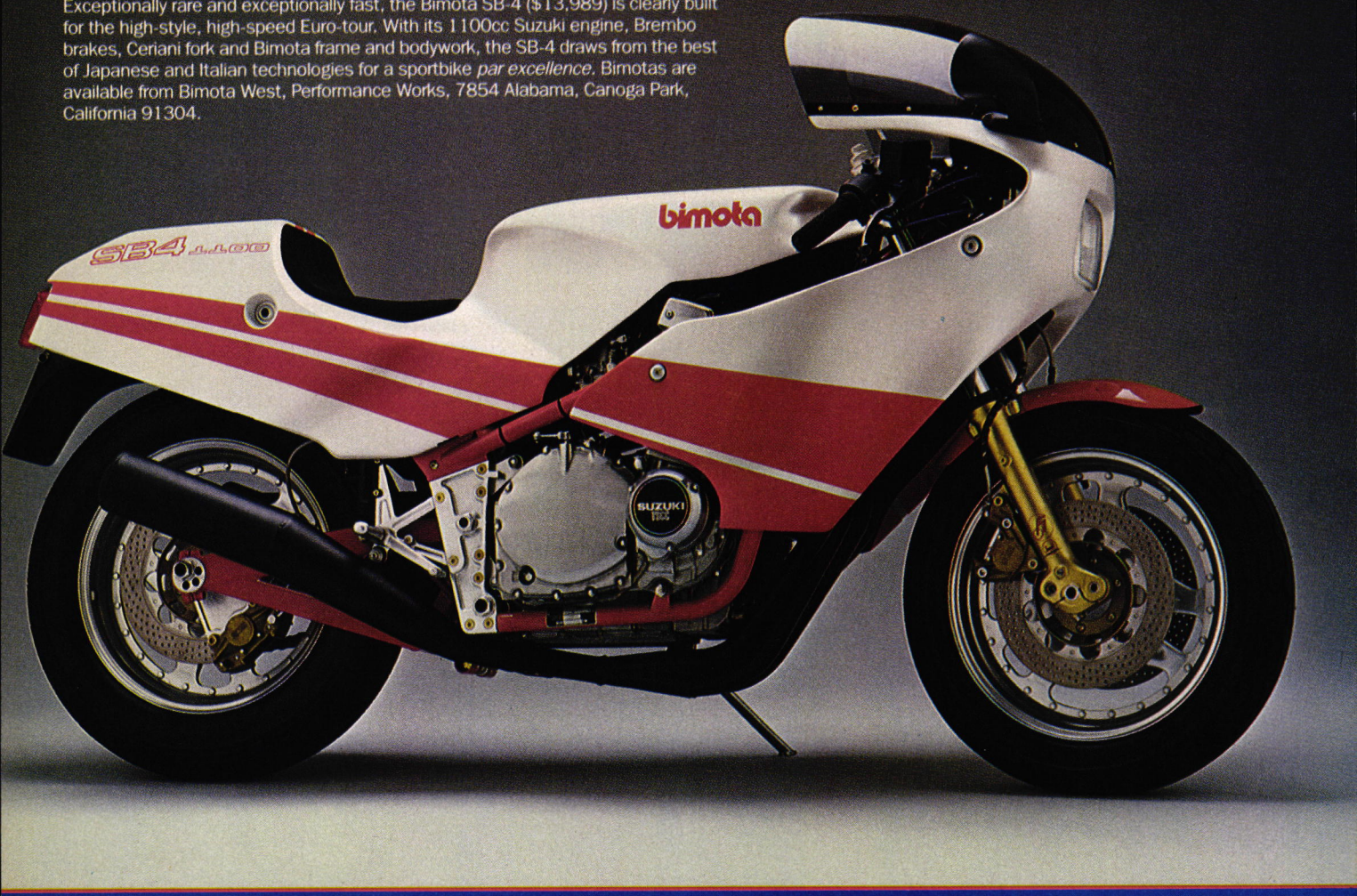
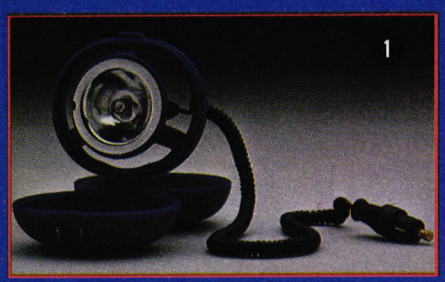
through motorcycle dealers or from Tour Rider, P.O. Box 2826, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401. (4) Harley-Davidson Deluxe toolkit ($69.50) is the best motorcycle-proportioned tool collection we've found for American hardware, and it comes packaged in a fitted leatherette pouch. High-quality chrome plating makes the tools easy to keep clean. The toolkit is available from Harley-Davidson dealers. (5) Seiko's Cyclist watch ($150) has all the features you'd expect from a Seiko digital watch, including LCD display and a stopwatch function, but it's adapted to the motorcyclist's needs with an angled face and magnifying crystal for easy reading while riding. The watch is available from HTC, P.O. Box 276, Bogota, New Jersey 07603. (6) Kryptonite's K-4 motorcycle lock ($59.95) has a larger-than-standard shank to fit the wider forks and wheels of heavyweight touring bikes, but it also fits other types of motorcycles as well. The K-4 lock is available through many motorcycle dealers. (7) Canon Sure Shot 35mm pocket camera ($299) includes a built-in flash and its own carrying case. Its small size lets it fit right in when space is limited on tour. The Canon Sure Shot is available at fine camera stores. (8) Bell M-2 helmet ($299.95) is the top-of-the-line full-coverage helmet from Bell. The M-2 is Snell '80-approved, and the price includes a helmet bag and accessories kit. The M-2 is available through most motorcycle shops. (9) National Cycle Audio Cannon ($299 with Sparkomatic AM/FM cassette player; $159 without player) has a deep cabinet for bass response, 5¼-inch-diameter low-range speakers and domed mylar tweeters. The Audio Cannon is available through motorcycle and accessory stores. (10) Bates Winter Gloves ($38.95) have curved fingers and different layers of insulation to provide good weather protection without sacrificing precise control. Bates Winter Gloves are available through motorcycle dealers. (11) Markland Cruise-Control ($179) provides fingertip throttle-control for the Honda Aspencade/Interstate or the Yamaha Venture/Royale. The cruise-control is available through motorcycle dealers, or from Markland Industries, 3500 Carriage Way, Santa Ana, California 92704. (12) Kerker's HD LeveLift ($215) raises the bike, with a side-to-side rocking motion, and allows secure parking on uneven surfaces. The LeveLift for Harley-Davidsons is available exclusively through Harley-Davidson dealers. LeveLifts for other motorcycles are available through accessory stores and motorcycle dealers.

Continued

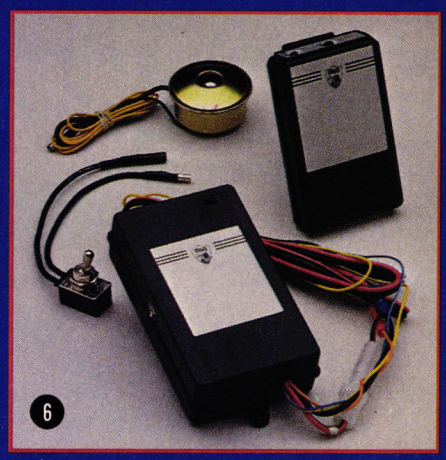
Euro-Style Touring

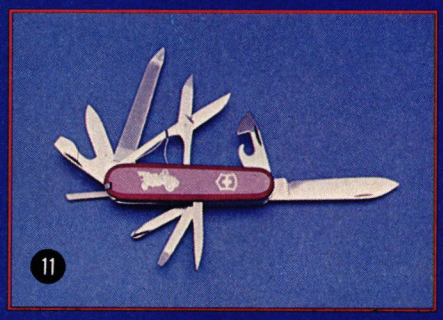
Exceptionally rare and exceptionally fast, the Bimota SB-4 ($13,989) is clearly built for the high-style, high-speed Euro-tour. With its 1100cc Suzuki engine, Brembo brakes, Ceriani fork and Bimota frame and bodywork, the SB-4 draws from the best of Japanese and Italian technologies for a sportbike *par excellence*. Bimotas are available from Bimota West, Performance Works, 7854 Alabama, Canoga Park, California 91304.

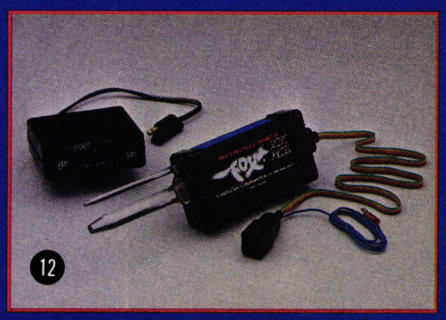




(1) BMW's multi-light ($24.60) could be a life-saver for roadside repairs, and can be adapted to any 12-volt electrical system. The light is self-contained in its clamshell case, and is available through BMW dealers. (2) BMW Sport Leathers ($420.84) are a zip-together pants/jacket combination with expandable elasticized pleats for a comfortable, non-restrictive fit. The Sport Leathers are part of a complete line of accessories available through BMW dealers. (3) Rukka's unlined one-piece rainsuit has elasticized cuffs and waist for a close fit and excellent weather-protection. Its bib-overall front provides complete weather-protection to mid-chest. A wide front flap covering the zipper adds to the suit's wet-weather usefulness. Rukka rainsuits are available through dealers handling Drag Specialties equipment. (4) Harro Elefantenboy tankbag







($89.16 to $122.34, depending on size) has a reinforced leather base and an expandable nylon upper-section. The expanded bag can hold a small tent and sleeping bag with room to spare. Harro tank bags are available through BMW Motorrad of St. Louis, 4011 Forest Park Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63108. (5) Honda's Aspencade toolkit ($143.13) is motorcycling's best-thought-out metric toolkit. The kit includes a rachet, extension and sockets in addition to the standard assortment of wrenches and special tools, all housed in a fitted tool-roll. The toolkit is available through Honda dealers. (6) Milo's Silent Screamer ($189.95) includes a remote pager you can carry with you. The system works independently of the motorcycle's electrical system, and also includes a self-contained alarm. The Silent Screamer is available through motorcycle and accessory stores, or through Milo Systems, 6995 State College Blvd., Units C and D, Fullerton, California 92631. (7) Ray racing boots ($109.95) are worn by Mike Baldwin, Anton Mang and Kork Ballington. The boots have top-grain cowhide exteriors and calfskin lining. Ray racing boots can be ordered in combinations of red, blue, black, white or green in sizes 6-to-12. Ray boots are available from Quadrifoglio, 5745 N. 11th St., Phoenix, Arizona 85014. (8) Nava's FiberNava helmet ($249.95) is a Snell '80-approved fiberglass/Kevlar full-coverage helmet—and the height of Euro-chic. The helmet is available through most motorcycle dealers, or directly from Nava U.S.A., 5729 Ward Ave., Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455. (9) Jollisport gloves ($52.50) have Velcro-adjustable gauntlets. Metal inserts in the gloves' palms protect your hands from road rash. Jollisport gloves are available from Quadrifoglio. (10) VDO tire gauge ($19.95) has all-metal construction and its own carrying case. The gauge holds the pressure reading until the release button is pushed, and is available through motorcycle and accessory stores. (11) A Victorinox Swiss Army knife is the next best thing to a toolbox. The Grand Prix model ($32.50) includes two blades, standard and Phillips-head screwdrivers, a file, and a wire-stripper. Victorinox Swiss Army knives are available through most cutlery stores. (12) Fox's XKMR radar detector is designed for motorcycle use, making it a welcome addition on a high-speed tour. Its antenna is easily hidden behind even a small fairing, and the unit detects both X- and K-band radar. Fox radar detectors are available through many motorcycle dealers. ●

9 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

COMING SOON

• The two-stroke streetbike is back, and we have California's bureaucrats to thank for it. Yamaha's potent RZ350LC is now U.S.-legal and soon will be in American dealerships—but only in 49 states. The two-stroke RZ, this year with Kenny Roberts'-racebike graphics, still is illegal in California, though, which is ironic because it was the action of that state's Air Resources Board that led to the RZ coming into the U.S. at all.

Earlier this year, California announced its intention to tighten state emissions-regulations for motorcycles. So, in order to sell motorcycles in California, manufacturers suddenly were faced with the prospect of having to drastically reduce the bikes' emissions. And the most feasible way to meet the proposed regulations, it seemed, was to mount catalytic convertors on the motorcycles.

Yamaha went a bit further than that, though. The firm reasoned that if catalytic convertors were going to be necessary, why not put them on a bike that had *real* emissions problems, clean it up, and thus be able to bring into this country one of the most sought-after streetbikes of the last few years: the two-stroke RZ350LC.

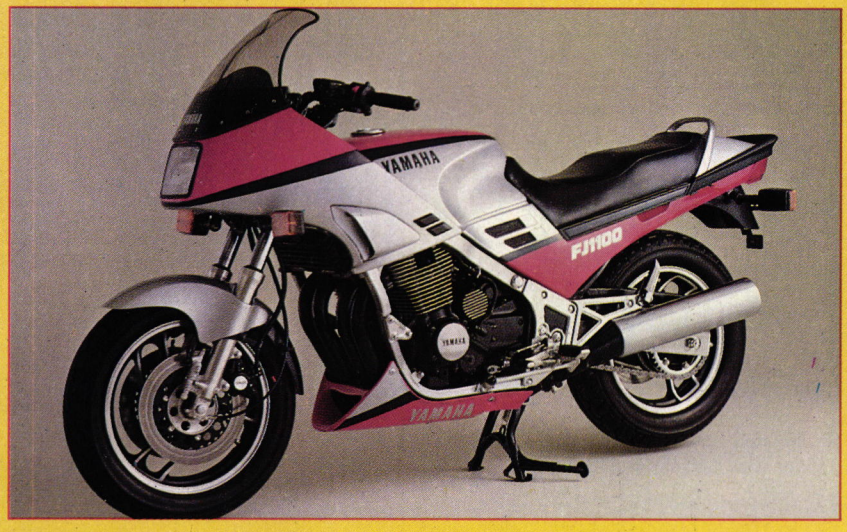
And that's exactly what has happened. Even with convertors, which are neatly tucked into the exhaust pipes, the power-valve-equipped RZ puts out a claimed 59 horsepower at 9000 rpm, and is 49-state legal. And with a Grand Prix-inspired frame to back up its racer-like engine and bodywork, the RZ350LC promises to be one powerful street package, indeed. For the last few years, the midsize sportbike crown has rested on the heads of 550cc four-stroke riders, but Yamaha has just served notice: Those guys had better watch out—the two-stroke is back in town.

• And the midsize-sportbike battle isn't the only front Yamaha will be fighting on in '84. The current contenders in the liter-plus field now have a serious Yamaha entry to deal with: the FJ1100. This super-sport 1100, powered by a new 16-valve, twin-cam, transverse four-cylinder engine, also has a state-of-the-art chassis, featuring square-tube construction, 16-inch wheels front *and* rear, chain final-drive and an anti-dive fork. Triple-disc brakes and a Monocross single-shock rear suspension also are parts of this package, which comes wrapped in an endurance-racer-inspired fairing, complete with a lower cowl. Liter-plus power, a racebike-like chassis and extensive use of aluminum and magnesium for weight savings attest that Yamaha finally has jumped into the big-bore-sportbike battle with both wheels.

• And the tuning fork company has shown how it intends to cope with the new ITC tariff rules, too. Bikes with engines displacing less than 700cc are exempt from the recently increased motorcycle-import duty, so there were sure to be a few new models that slip in just under that limit. Here's the first, though: the XV700 Virago—based on last year's XV750 Virago—right at 699cc. But the displacement drop isn't the only thing new about

Yamaha has done what many thought impossible: It brought back the two-stroke

Catalytic convertors make the RZ350LC 49-state legal.



Yamaha's new FJ1100 will get serious consideration in The Battle of '84

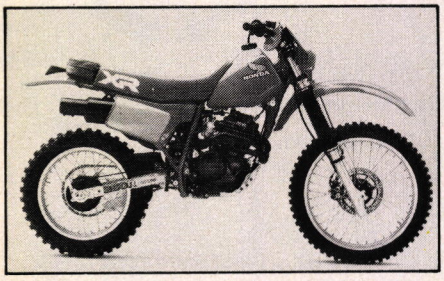
The liter-plus sportbike class just got one more contender.

Continued

Yamaha's latest cruiser. This 699cc vee-twin street rumbler comes with a right-side-mounted air filter, twin shorty-dual exhausts and twin-shock rear suspension—all with an unmistakably American influence. The XV700 also has its newly restyled teardrop tank mounted ahead of a saddle designed to resemble a solo seat and pillion. This bike has a chopperesque 36 degree steering-head angle, and to complete the custom look, the XV700 also has wire-spoke wheels.

But the tariff-beating Virago isn't the only vee-twin cruiser to come from Yamaha this year. There's the XV1000 model, too, which comes with all the styling and engineering tricks found on the 700.

• Yamaha's motocrossers for '84 received their share of updates, too, but the changes on the dirtbikes are more subtle than those on Yamaha's streetbikes. The Open-class YZ490, for instance, has been fine-tuned to give its rider something any motocross racer can appreciate: a claimed horsepower-increase throughout the rev range, along with handling improvements to allow that power to be put to the dirt more effectively than with the '83 model. Revised porting, a new carburetor, a shortened wheelbase and the use of one-piece, Z-shaped spokes in the wheels are just some of the changes made during the YZ490's '84 tuneup.

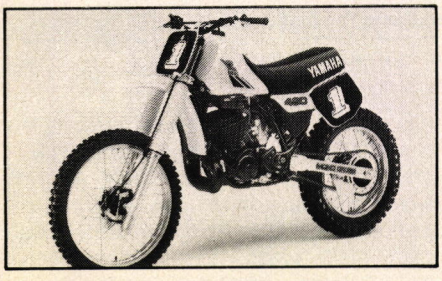


XR250R comes wrapped in backwoods basic

And packed with a four-valve engine.

This 250cc works bike is on the block

"We'll sell what we race . . . ."



Yamaha is sticking with its Open-classer

Fine-tuned for '84.

The XR200R isn't for beginners only

Thanks to the new RFVC engine.

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Last year's enduro champ is on the street

Lights and horns for the XL350R.

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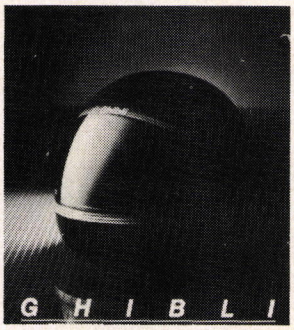

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Each helmet carries a full one-year warranty. There is a limit of (2) helmets per address at these prices, but requests mailed or called in early enough (before January 20th, 1984) are permitted to order up to 4 helmets.

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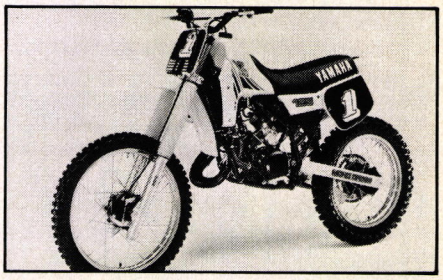
All telephone requests must be received prior to close of business (4:00 PM Pacific Standard Time) Tuesday, January 31, 1984.

*These promotional prices are good only during dates and times listed above.
For latest prices after **January 31, 1984,** write or call the company direct

• And in the hotly contested 250cc class, Yamaha's 1984 strategy is the same as for the Open class: selective refinement. The biggest change on this year's YZ250 is its port arrangement, which has been drastically altered to improve the bike's top-end performance. And Yamaha will put its reputation on the starting line in '84, by supplying its factory riders with the same YZ250s that will be available on any Yamaha dealer's showroom floor. The company's race policy, as expressed by its new president, is clear: "We will race what we sell and sell what we race."

• And that philosophy filters right down to the 125cc class, too. This year, Yamaha's factory riders, support riders and amateur riders all will have the same basic machine: a showroom-stock YZ125L that is changed very little from its 1983 form. Like all the other '84 YZs, the biggest difference in this year's 125 is its porting, which has been extensively revamped for a claimed increase in power throughout the engine's rpm range. In addition, the detail changes to the YZ125's suspension, steering, brakes and frame should reflect improvements to support the fact that Yamaha's corporate reputation is at stake every time a YZ comes to the starting gate.

• And the smallest YZ, the YZ80L, is no different than any other racer in Yamaha's '84 lineup; it's a showroom-available model that

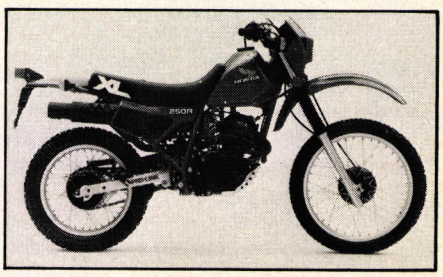


Yamaha's MXers all have new wheels for '84

Using one-piece "Z"-shaped spokes.

This year's minicrosser got the treatment

Yamaha's '84 MX tuneup.



Quarter-liter enduro punch — with manners

This year's XL250R d-p machine.

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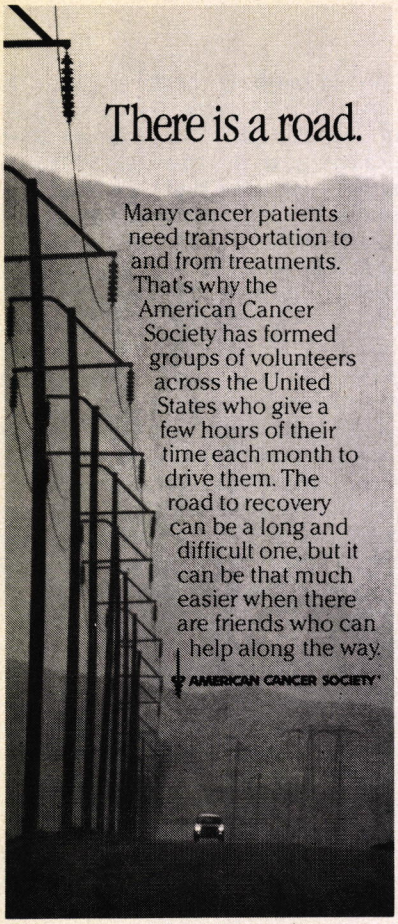
There is a road.
Many cancer patients need transportation to and from treatments. That's why the American Cancer Society has formed groups of volunteers across the United States who give a few hours of their time each month to drive them. The road to recovery can be a long and difficult one, but it can be that much easier when there are friends who can help along the way.
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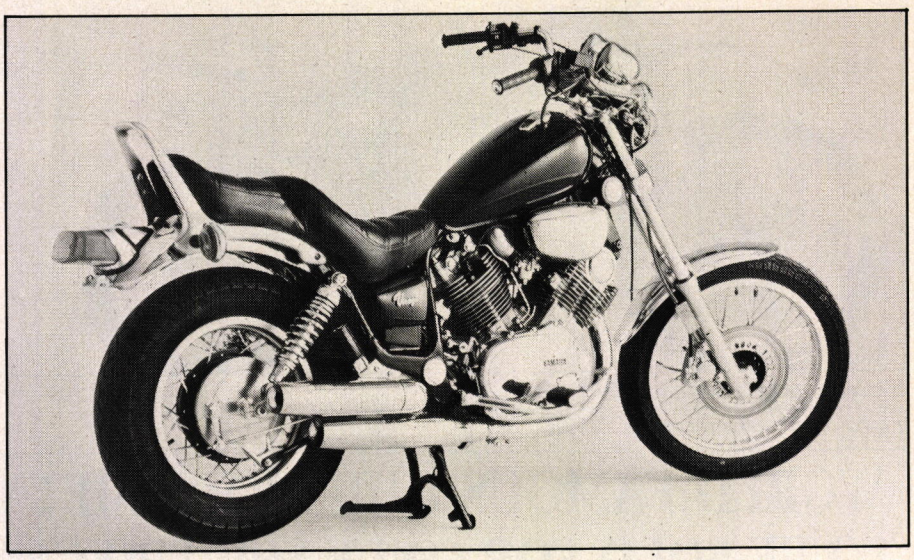
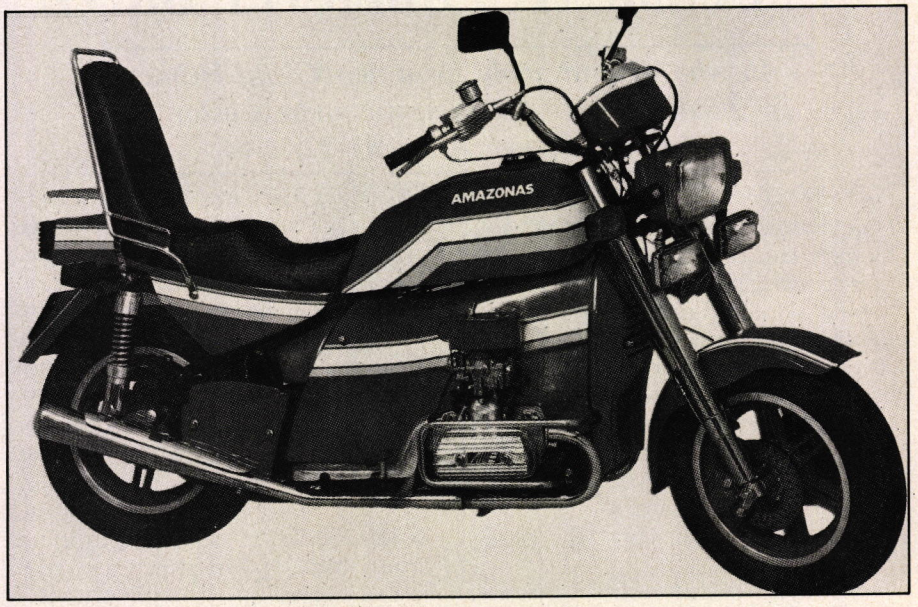


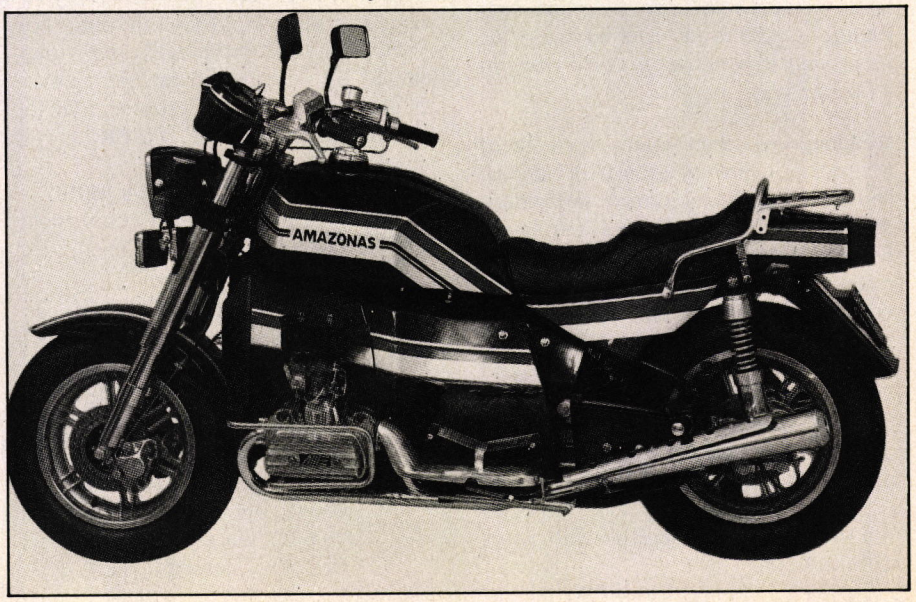
A tariff-beating drop in displacement isn't the only change on the Virago

It also has twice-pipes, twin-shock suspension and a side-mounted air filter.



Motorcycle manufacturing is alive and well in Sao Paulo, Brazil

But these Amazonas bikes actually owe their existence to the lowly Volkswagon.

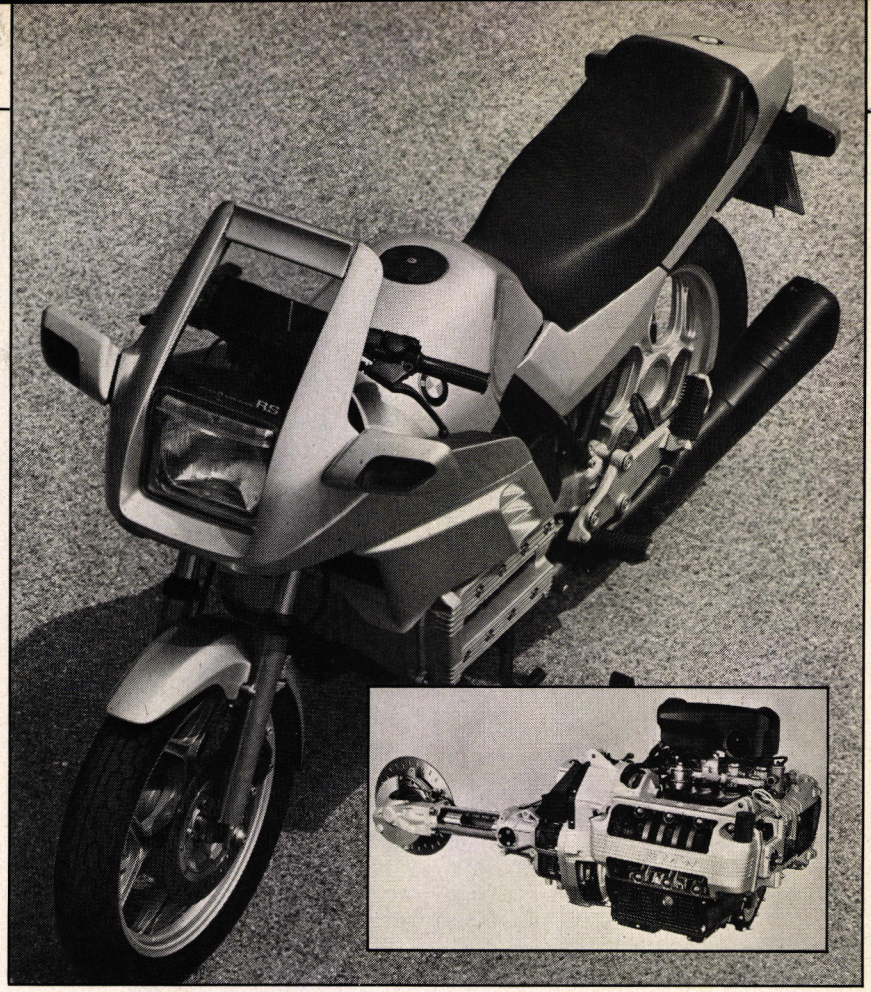


PREVIEW:
K100 BMW

Four cylinders and fuel injection from Berlin.

• The worst-kept secret of the last few years finally is out: BMW has announced its long-rumored inline four. The company debuted the new bike in September, but don't rush down to your nearest dealer looking for one quite yet. The liquid-cooled, 987cc four won't be available in the U.S. until '85, although the machines will be offered in Europe this year (the line includes three bikes: the K100 standard, K100RT tourer and the K100RS sport-tourer you see here).

The K100 series took four years to develop and marks a new direction for BMW. Company officials claim it is meant to compete *directly* with Japanese machinery, giving sportbike buyers a European alternative. And with its claimed 90 horsepower, Bosch fuel injection and 526-pound dry weight, the K100 should provide an interesting comparison. Look for a full CYCLE GUIDE technical analysis and riding impression soon.



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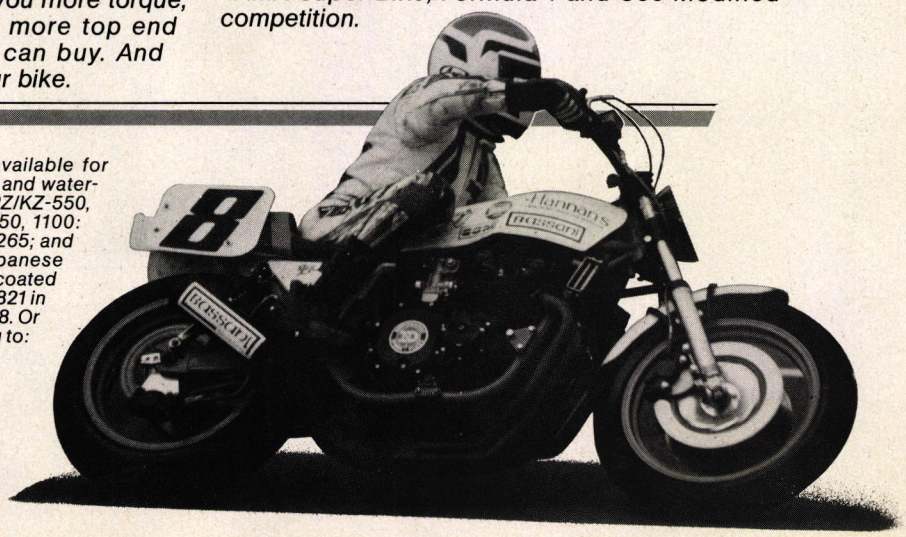

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PREVIEW:

Kawasaki ZX900GPz

16 valves and liquid-cooling are just the beginning.

• The newest GPz stands a good chance of being the best yet. Although Kawasaki has withdrawn from professional roadracing in this country (see Pit Bits), this new GPz900R shows that the company is far from out of the performance-bike business.

• The ZX900 points the way for Kawasaki's new direction in supersport streetbikes: light weight, low *cg* and a power-to-weight ratio Kawasaki figures might be the best in the business. The company is betting that the new 900 will offer the best of both big-bore sportbike worlds: the 900's overall size is comparable to most 750s (the ZX900 measures just 0.75-in wider than Honda's VF750F), while the 900 engine's power output is expected to top 100 horsepower, putting this GPz right into the thick of the liter-plus performance wars.

And that new engine is the focal point of the ZX900. The liquid-cooled, twin-cam four features a number of Kawasaki firsts, not the least of which is a 16-valve head. The inline, transverse four also serves as a stressed member on the bike's new diamond-type frame.

From its 16-inch front wheel mounted in an anti-dive fork, right back to its straight, GP-style mufflers, the ZX900GPx is chockfull of Kawasaki firsts. We'll have a riding impression and more information on the newest GPz in an upcoming issue.

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will go head-to-head against the other factories' one-off works bikes. There's not much that's radically new about the '84 YZ80, though. Instead, it, too, is a product of selective refinement, which focuses on the bike's proven engine, frame and suspension.

• Honda recently slipped the wraps off some new '84 machinery, unveiling its XL- and XR-series bikes. A standout in this group is the new XL350R, a dual-purpose thumper that Honda claims has the horsepower of an Open-class enduro bike.

• Right beside the new XL350 in Honda's lineup is its smaller stablemate: the XL250R. Like the 350, this quarter-liter thumper also features Honda's Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC) chamber, adjustable Pro-Link suspension and an air-adjustable front fork, which should help make the XL250R a versatile dual-purpose machine.

• Honda's newest backwoods mount is the XR250R, a four-stroke thumper with RFVC chamber and dual-port, dual-carb induction. This new enduro weapon's damping-adjustable Pro-Link rear suspension and air-adjustable fork, along with its twin-piston caliper front brake, shows promise of providing good control on the toughest trails.

• Honda spend some R&D dollars on the XR200R, too. The 200R has long been a favorite of entry-level dirt riders, because its light weight and manueverability inspires confidence in new riders. But this year, with an all-new RFVC engine, the XR200R should have serious enduro-power, and could interest serious enduro riders, too.

• But not all of '84's hardware will be coming from Japan. To demonstrate that point, a few new machines from Amazonas, of São Paulo, Brazil, have just made their debut. These bikes, the Esporte 1600 and the Super Esporte 1600, both use 1600cc Volkswagen automobile engines and transmissions, complete with reverse gear. The disc brakes at both ends of these half-breed bikes, also are of VW origin, as are the bike's 5.00x16 tires.

FEDERAL CASES

• The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recently voted to reconsider its ruling on the 1.0 gram hydrocarbon per kilometer emissions standard for motorcycles. The 1.0 g/k limit, originally adopted in 1975 and scheduled to go into effect in '82, had been ammended several times already. The most recent update was in 1980, when CARB granted manufacturers an interim 2.5 g/k standard for the '82 and '83 model-year motorcycles, with the stipulation that the new 1.0 g/k limit would go into effect with the 1984 bikes. When the board refused petitions from the motorcycle industry to ammend the hydrocarbon standard for '84 bikes, California Senate Bill 158 was introduced and passed, exempting any bike made before July 1, 1984 from the new 1.0 g/k level. This legislation was meant to provide time for the motorcycle industry once again to present its case before

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GUIDE LINES *Continued*

CARB, arguing the infeasibility of widespread use of catalytic convertors on motorcycles and proposing alternatives that would reduce motorcycle emissions. This time CARB listened; staff members will attend workshops with the motorcycle manufacturers to learn more about the problem from the motorcycle community's point of view before formal public hearings are held.

• Motorcycle riders are getting better. According to figures compiled by the AMA and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, riders nationwide were involved in 5 percent fewer accidents during 1982 than they were in 1981, the second consecutive year for a decline in the motorcycle accident total. During 1982, 165,689 motorcycle traffic accidents occurred, down 9,333 from the '81 figure.

• Californians haven't given up in their bid to get state officials to repay the $21.5 million taken from the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) fund. The fund had been established with fees collected from off-road motorcyclists, and was earmarked for the purchase and maintenance of off-road riding areas. However, state legislators twice tapped the fund to balance California's budget, the first time for $8.5 million and then for an additional $13 million. SB156, calling for the repayment of that money, has just passed the California Assembly's Ways and Means Committee, though, and is now headed for assembly vote.

• North Carolina might be the place to head for if your riding privilege is in danger of being suspended. According to AMA sources, that state is considering implementing a "good driver points" system, whereby riders observed performing civic-minded functions at the scene of accidents or emergencies would be awarded points on their driving records that would counteract points accumulated through traffic violations.

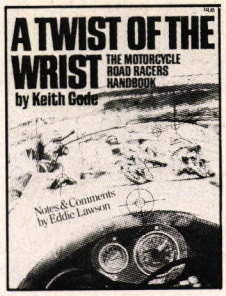
• If S1346 passes into law in Massachusetts, riders in that state will have a new nighttime look. The bill, currently under consideration in the Massachusetts Senate Ways and Means Committee, requires that reflective orange jackets or harnesses be worn by motorcyclists who ride at night.

• And in Minnesota, riders might have to spend a little extra care packing their bikes for a tour. Senate Bill 712 in that state, if passed, would prohibit carrying any cargo on a motorcycle—if that cargo could be construed as interfering with the rider's vision or hindering his safe operation of the bike.

HARD CASH

• The opening round of the 1984 Wrangler Supercross Series, scheduled for February 11–12 at the Seattle Kingdome, will be more profitable than usual for a select group of riders. The "Wrangler Dash", a 20-lap feature, will be run in conjunction with the regularly scheduled AMA-sanctioned event. Lining up for the separate $75,000 purse will be a pack made up of the fastest first-round heat-race

Book Review



A Twist Of The Wrist
by Keith Code
127 pages, $14.95
Acrobat Books
P.O. Box 480820
Los Angeles, California 90048

• Keith Code operates the California Superbike School, a course in motorcycle roadracing. Sessions in the classroom and on the racetrack combine to show prospective go-fast guys that lower lap times are the result of thinking, planning and observation not just of horsepower and determination. Code's book, "A Twist Of The Wrist," is an attempt to communicate some of the fundamentals taught in the CSS course.

The would-be Kenny Roberts will dive right into "Twist," but unfortunately the book bogs on the line. The first six chapters read more like the latest pop-psychology best-seller than a book on motorcycle roadracing. Code examines in detail the processes involved in thinking and decision-making on a motorcycle. He plays semantic games until the reader begins to think "Twist" is nothing but a lot of power-of-positive-thinking hype. The plodding, repetitive writing style in these chapters quickly becomes annoying. And although the cover promises "Notes and Comments by Eddie Lawson," these asides are disappointing. They're brief and often don't relate to the subject.

But if the reader can tough it out through the first half of "Twist" he'll be rewarded for his patience by clearly written chapters in the second half on braking, steering, sliding, hanging-off and passing—all full of concise, practical information of use to the racer and street rider alike. There's even a chapter on falling off, something most riders don't want to think about until they absolutely have to. But what Code has to say about getting off could save a life.

With graduates like Wayne Rainey as endorsement, it's hard to fault the CSS as a worthwhile investment for anyone serious about lower lap times. But without the benefit of track time, and considering its slow start, "A Twist Of The Wrist," despite being the best book yet on motorcycle roadracing technique, is a poor substitute for actually attending the school.

—Jerry Smith

winners from each of 1983's 16 stadium races, one rider filling a wild-card slot picked from among last year's 16 Last Chance Qualifier winners, the three 1983 AMA Outdoor Champions and the 1983 Rookie of the Year. To give the "Dash" an international flair, the 500cc World MX Champion, the Canadian MX Champion and the Japanese Champion also will compete.

• Wrangler has another Supercross payout program going, but for this one the riders weren't eligible. This time the top five Super Series mechanics, chosen by their respective rider's placing, lined up for some additional Wrangler money. Heading the list, and receiving $1000, was Cliff White, who wrenched for series champion David Bailey. Jeff Clark, tuner for Suzuki rider Mark Barnett, collected $800, while Jon Rosenstiel got $600 for his work on Broc Glover's bike, Mike McAndrews drew $400 for his part in helping Jeff Ward, and Honda mechanic Jim Felt received a $200 check for his efforts in fielding the fifth-place bike, ridden by Johnny O'Mara.

• The Maisch family hasn't given up on its failed motorcycle company. Hans, Peter and Wilhelm Jr. Maisch, reportedly, already have raised close to $500,000 in an attempt to rescue Maico, the family business. At this point, though, their rescue bid doesn't appear as if it will be successful. The bankrupt company, with debts totaling almost $7 million, has been refused financial help by German authorities on both the federal and local levels.

• The Barstow-To-Vegas desert race was last run in 1975. Protests by environmentalist groups had convinced government officials to ban the event. But the AMA, through its legal division, has won back the right to run the cross-desert classic, which is slated for November 26, 1983. That victory came at a price, though: The AMA has spent more than $150,000 in legal fees to open desert land to off-road racing, allowing events like the Barstow-to-Vegas race to be run.

• Harley-Davidson is offering an extra enticement to riders thinking about buying an FXRT Sport Glide. To help sway the decision, Harley is throwing a free accessory package into the deal, made up of an AM/FM radio/cassette player with antenna, a four-piece gauge and clock set, fairing pockets and a Tour Pac trunk with luggage rack. This "Hallelujah Package," as it's called, is valued at $900 and applies to any FXRT bought between August 1, 1983 and March 31, 1984.

• Another bit of Harley-Davidson news brings up the possibility of an entirely new motorcycle with the unlikely name Harumph. Although Vaughan Beals, H-D chairman and Chief Executive Officer, says any speculation at this point is " . . . extremely premature," he does admit that while Harley officials are in England on other matters they will meet with the West Midlands County Council about the current situation of Triumph Motorcycles, Ltd., which has just withdrawn from the motorcycle market. Beals described the meeting as " . . . purely exploratory," saying " . . . it's fairly common for a business to at least take a look at the options and opportunities that might exist when a competitor goes into liquidation."

• Harley officials also are meeting with executives from the Japanese motorcycle industry, the claimed purpose of the conference a search for acceptable alternatives to the ITC recommended tariff. The talks will center around Japanese-guaranteed long-term loans for Harley-Davidson, which the company says will allow it to bring new models to market quicker than the tariff alone would accomplish. These latest meetings between Harley-Davidson and representatives of the Japanese Big Four are the result of last spring's Williamsburg Economic Summit, where financial leaders from the U.S. and Japan agreed to the need for better trade relations between the two countries.

• Statistics just released by the Motorcycle Industry Council indicate just what's happening with the backlong of Japanese motorcycles stored in this country: They're being sold—quickly. MIC numbers show motorcycle imports to the U.S. down 25 percent through April, 1983 compared to the same period in 1982, while new-bike registrations for this 1983 reporting period were *up* a little over five percent. The actual unit-number and dollar-

Continued

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value figures are 290,304 bikes valued at $433 million imported through April '83, while the April '82 numbers were 388,802 bikes brought in at a value of $531 million.

RUMORS

• It looks as if Honda's '84 streetbike line might not include one of the models most rumored in the last few months: the vee-six. Late word has it that this supersport tourer (which had been slated for an Interceptor-like look for the European market, and a streamlined, sport-touring style, ala late CBX1000 for the U.S., won't be in the 1984 product line. Insiders hint that this project is far from being canceled, though, and we'll just have to wait a little longer before sampling a 1016cc Honda vee-six, a bike that's, said produce 130-plus horsepower.

• Another Honda sportbike we've heard about won't make it into the '84 lineup, either, at least not in this country. Our sources say that as a result of the ITC tariff ruling, it's highly unlikely that the CBX750 will be offered for sale in America. But from what we've heard, Europeans and Canadians might start anticipating a 91-horsepower sportbike powered by a 750cc inline-four. The engine, we're told, is based on the 650cc Nighthawk's. And besides just a boost in displacement, our sources hint that the new CBX750 uses a square-tube frame, 16-inch front wheel and a four-into-one exhaust.

• Suzuki, it seems, has been working on a new line of trail/play bikes but, because of the backlog of unsold '82 and '83 machinery still in the dealer pipeline, most likely these machines will be held back from an '84 introduction. The new bikes, a 125cc machine and a 250, both are powered by new two-strokes that are liquid-cooled. Our sources say to look for these machines in late '84, or even '85.

• Now that Yamaha has broken the ice by bringing two-stroke streetbikes back into the U.S., you might think that Honda would jump right into this market with its MVX-series streetable two-strokes (250cc, 400cc, 500cc). But that now seems unlikely, because we've heard that Honda has experienced major problems with the new MVX; problems large enough to cancel the entire project. Reportedly, the MVX's vee-three two-stroke engine has suffered a recurring cooling and lubrication failure resulting in the center cylinder seizing. But we also hear there's already another street-going two-stroke engine well along in development, ready to replace the ill-fated MVX. We're told this new engine, coded the MRX, is a 90 degree vee-twin. So far, the only displacement size being worked with on this new vee-twin is a 250cc bike, meant, our Japanese sources say, to be a direct product-line replacement for the MVX250, which was released before the cooling and lubrication problems became apparent.

AFTER THE FACT

• "The Nickel Racers" in the Sport Lines section of the October '83 issue requires some additional explanation. We reported that Matt Guzzetta and his Suzuki GN125-powered streamliner finished third in this year's running of Craig Vetter's annual fuel economy contest. That's correct, as far as it goes.

Guzzetta, however, wasn't the only rider or mechanic responsible for that bike's third-place finish. Fujio Yoshimura had done some experimental engine tuning on the bike and rode the machine during the closed-course section of the event. Because Yoshimura weighs 65 pounds less than Guzzetta, the pair felt Yoshimura would do better on Laguna Seca's hilly road course. For the '84 economy run Yoshimura will team with Guzzetta once again, helping to build an all-new entry.

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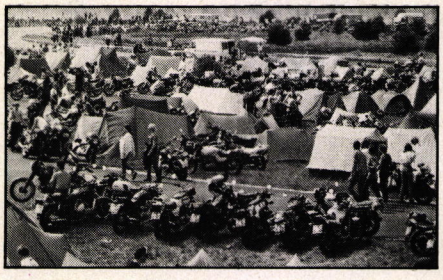
APART FROM THE CROWD

• Anyone at Continental's famed Contidrome test track last June was anything but Apart From The Crowd; more than 30,000 bike enthusiasts converged on the tire company's proving grounds for the eighth annual Conti Rally, claimed to be the world's largest motorcycle rally. But attendance wasn't the only record set at the '83 Conti Rally; a record



quantity of German sausage and beer was consumed, as well. Which must have been interesting, because throughout the event's three days the 'drome's 1.3-mile infield handling course was open to anyone who wanted to give it a try.

• Here's something racers have been doing for years and street riders can now follow suit: Use medical-information stickers on their helmets. For $1, KSB Enterprises (P.O. Box 23453, Portland, Oregon 97223; [503] 684-1780) offers its Safety Alert Sticker Kit, consisting of four helmet stickers along with a wallet-sized medical alert card. The intent is obvious, and in the event of a mishap, could prove invaluable: Paramedics, or anyone administering first aid to an unconscious rider, would immediately know the fallen rider's name, blood type and the fact that he carried a medical alert card in his wallet, listing any special medications he might be taking or alergies he might have. The stickers themselves are small enough so as not to detract from a helmet's graphics, yet when properly placed above a helmet's chinstrap buckle are all but impossible to overlook. KSB's sticker kit is one piece of streetable real-racer equipment that could save a life.

• The big race is on, and this year it'll be two wheels against four. What race is that, you ask? The Great American Race, of course, first run in May of '83. This cross-country contest (California to Indianapolis) is limited to vehicles manufacturered in 1941 or earlier, and had 69 entries in '83—all cars. But all that's going to change for the '84 running because at least three motorcycle teams already are in: Californians Dave and Bud Ekins are going after the event's $100,000 first prize in their 1936 Harley-Davidson sidecar outfit, while fellow Golden Staters Lance Tidwell and John Cameron each have entered sidecar-equipped '26 Harleys. Finally, the burning question will be resolved: Which is faster, car or bike? At least we'll have the pre-war answer. •

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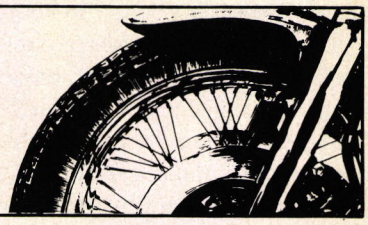

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TRACK TEST:

Honda CR250R

Honda picks up where it finished last year.

BY RON LAWSON

Whoever said "If it isn't broken, don't fix it" doesn't design motocross bikes for Honda. Because when deciding what to do with its CR motocross models for 1984, Honda filed that kind of thinking under Philosophies To Forget. And for evidence, you need only compare the new CR250R with last year's version. There certainly couldn't have been too much wrong with the '83 CR, since it was unquestionably the best bike in the 250 class; but it got "fixed" anyway, to the tune of a new engine, frame and rear suspension.

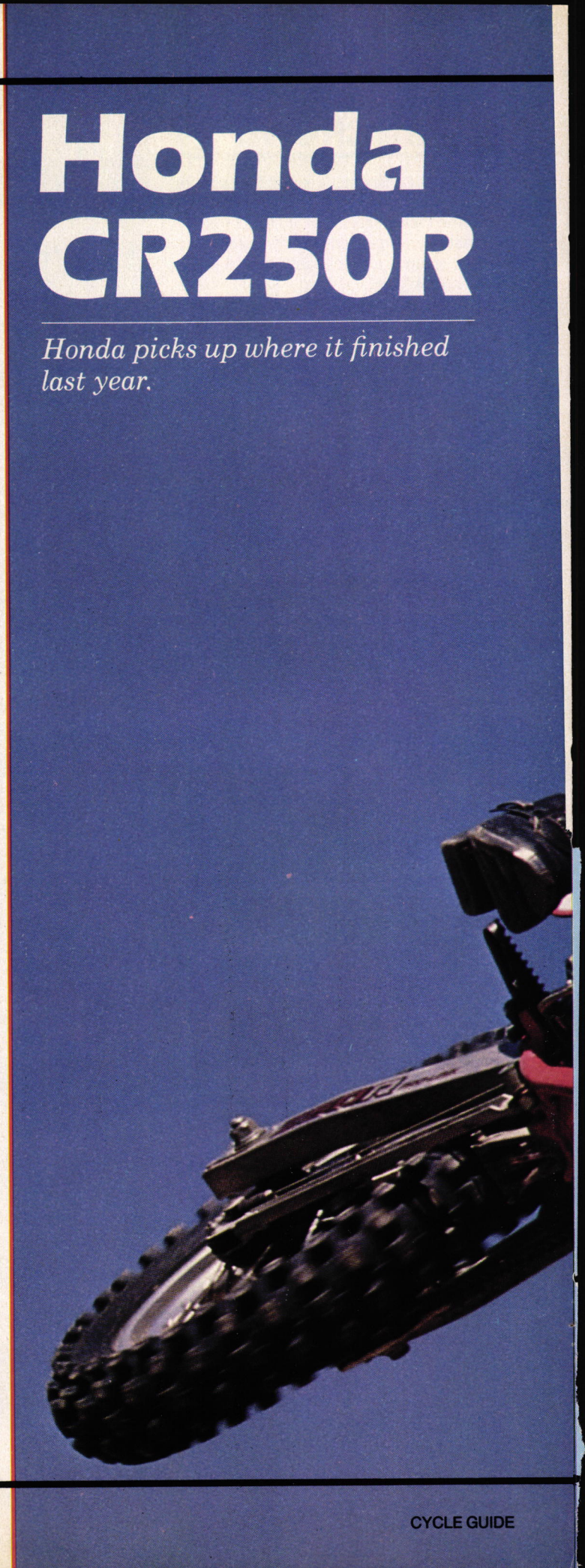
In the year-to-year battle to build the best motocross bike, however, those kinds of drastic changes make perfect sense. MX bikes have become so sophisticated that massive yearly mechanical changes can, at best, effect only slight improvements in performance. So, since most manufacturers aren't willing—or able—to bear the sizeable expense of completely redesigning their MX bikes every year, it's usually easier for a company to get to the top in motocross than to *stay* on top. But Honda seems relentlessly determined to stay on top these days, regardless of the expense. Honda maintains the largest and most costly MX racing program, and appears willing to redesign its production-line motocross bikes annually if that's what is needed to keep ahead of the pack.

Based on the number of changes that the CR250R has undergone, Honda must have felt that 1984 would be just such a year. But in many ways, the word "new" is misleading when describing the latest CR. For one thing, several of its most significant features seem to capitalize on ideas pioneered by other manufacturers, although in each case, the execution is exclusive to Honda. The Automatic Torque Amplification Chamber (or ATAC, pronounced "attack"), for example, is similar in concept to Yamaha's Power Valve System but operates on an entirely different principle. And up front is a hydraulic disc brake—an idea made acceptable for motocross by Kawasaki—but the CR uses the twin-piston caliper design that has become a Honda trademark.

Another way in which the CR250R is not *totally* new is its engine, which is a mirror-image of last year's powerplant. Everything has been reversed, side-to-side, so that the drive chain now is on the left instead of the right, and the clutch, the kickstart lever and the pipe are on the right instead of the left. And in the process, most of the internal pieces have been changed, either to accommodate the flip-flopping of the engine or simply to make the '84 bike peform better. Either way, the end result is a new engine that, design-wise, is not altogether different.

And that raises a question: Were all of those changes *really* necessary?

Continued



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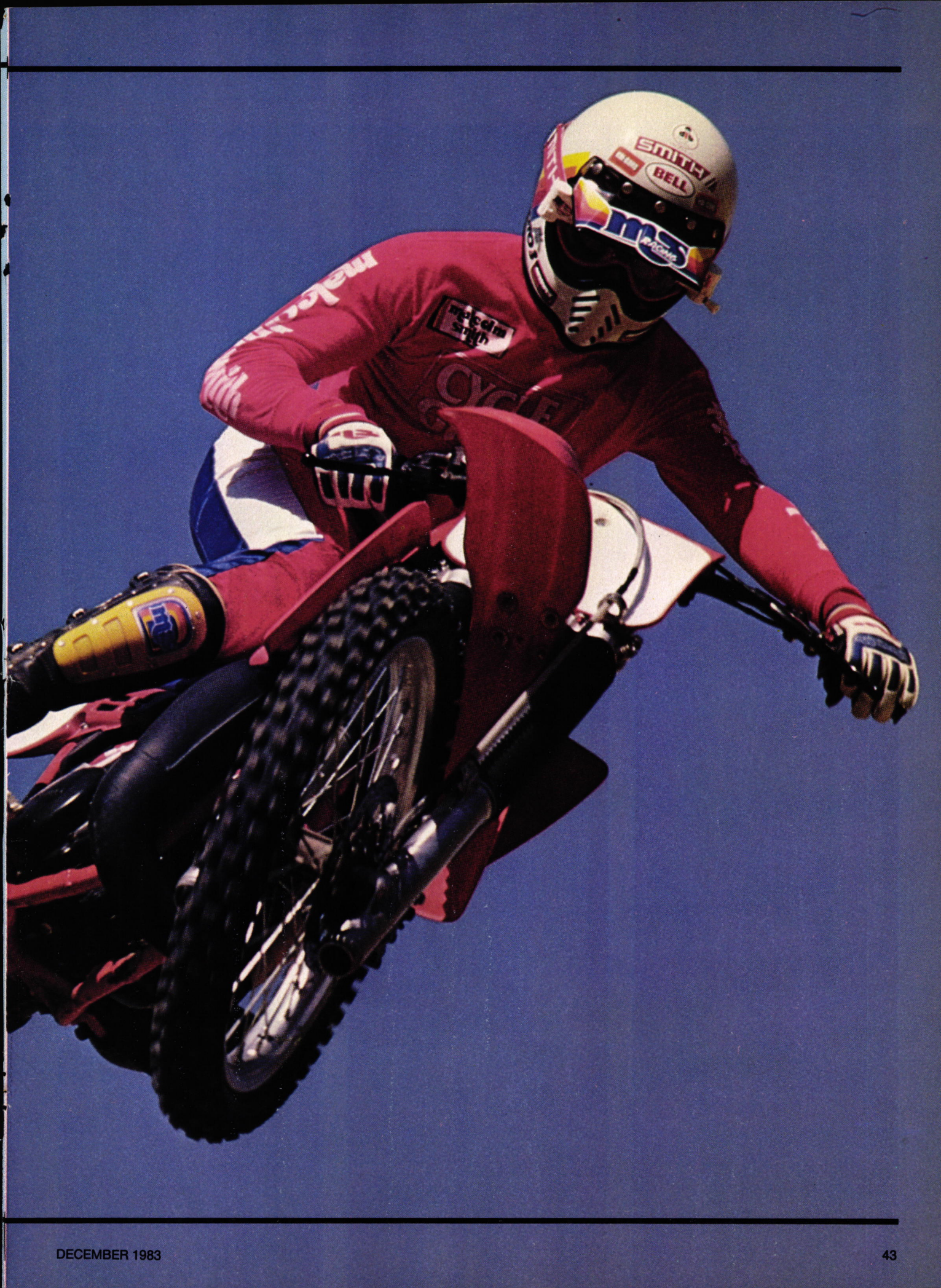
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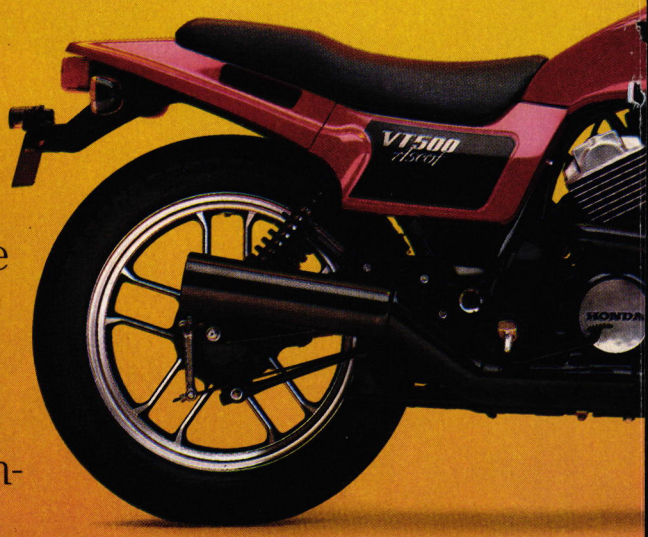
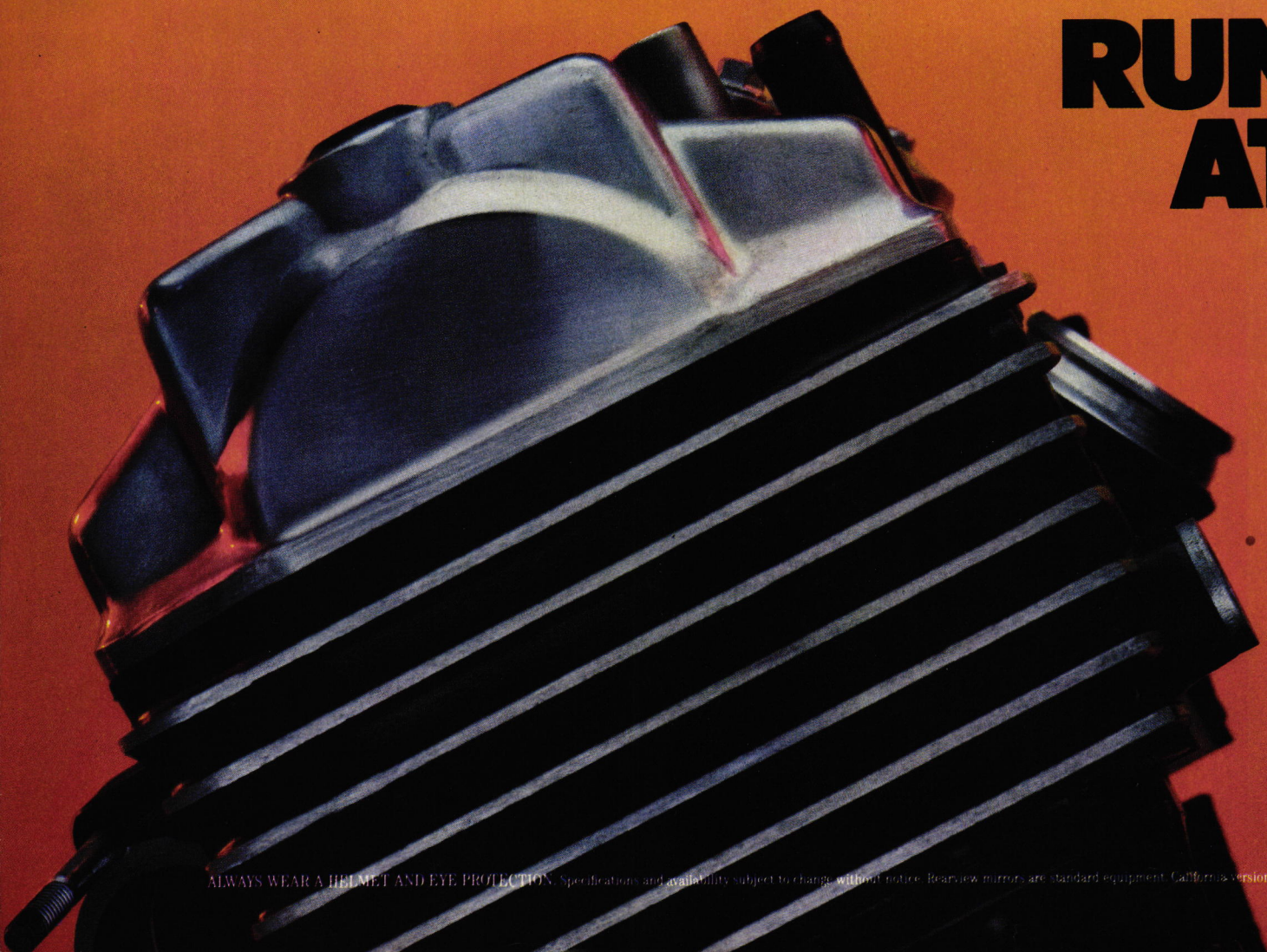


RUN AT



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Tech Inspection:

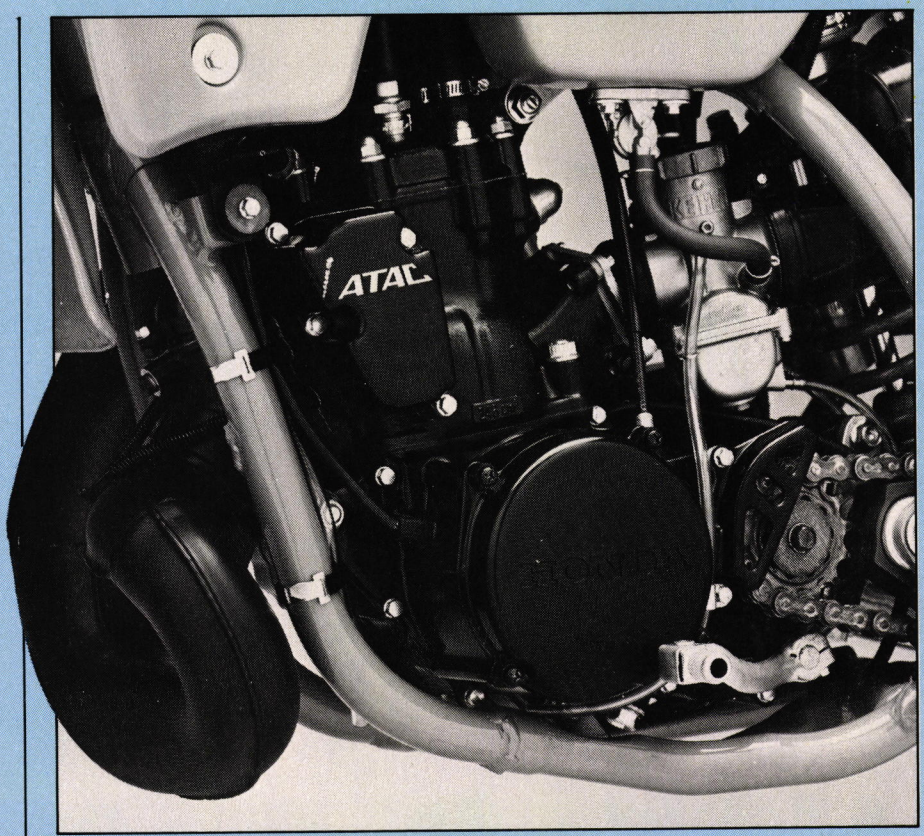
ENGINE:

Although the new CR250R powerplant shares few parts with last year's engine, some of the liquid-cooled two-stroke's key specifications—such as the 66mm bore and 72mm stroke—are unchanged. But the addition of the Automatic Torque Amplification Chamber (see "ATAC," pg. 50) mandated certain tuning changes relative to the '83 engine. The compression ratio is higher, the exhaust port is taller and has no bridge, the transfer ports are wider, and the top of the intake port is lower. Most of those changes are intended to yield more top-end power, while lower-rpm performance is bolstered by the altered exhaust-system resonance provided by the ATAC system.

The piston in the '84 engine is similar to the replacement piston made available in mid-1983 to correct a breakage problem on earlier models. The crankshaft is lighter than on last year's CR, even though it has the same amount of rotational inertia. This was accomplished by making both counterweights wider but machining away much of the material closest to the main-bearing journals. Nevertheless, the overall flywheel effect is greater because of a switch from an internal-rotor ignition to the external-flywheel type.

DRIVETRAIN:

The '84 CR engine has all of its internals reversed compared with its 1983 counterpart. This was done for three reasons: for easier kickstarting; to allow the brake pedal and linkage to be tucked behind the frame's siderails without interfering with the chain; and to allow a lighter and narrower rear hub and swingarm. But the switch also brought about a multitude of small changes, including a redesign of the shift mechanism to prevent the shift drum from rotating past its detented positions. And the clutch, in addition to being on the other (right) side of the motor, now uses driven plates made of aluminum rather than of steel, and drive plates that are wider and have a higher asbestos content. The transmission is little-changed, though, except that second gear uses wider gears on both shafts. All of the gearbox ratios are unchanged from last year's; but the primary ratio is taller and the final-drive ratio is lower, resulting in overall gearing that is marginally taller.



The new CR250R has a left-side output shaft and a right-side kickstart lever

But Honda did more than hold last year's blueprints up to a mirror.

CHASSIS:

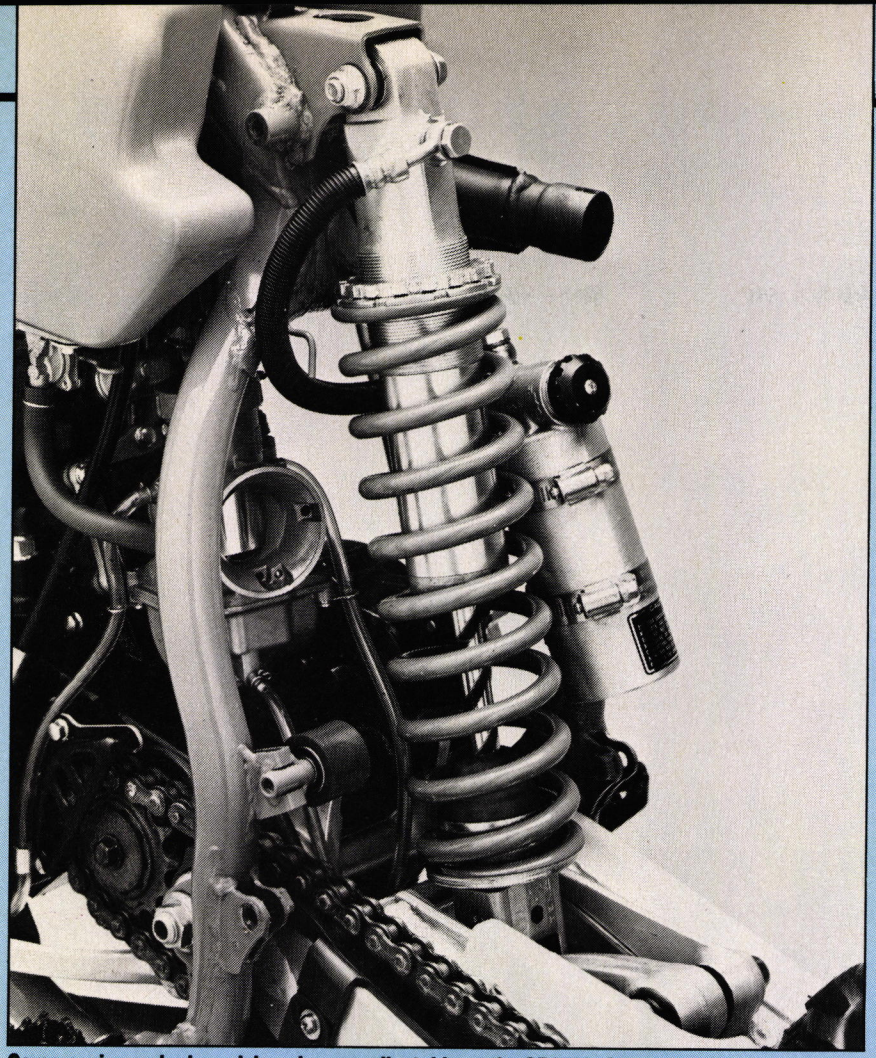
Frame: The CR250R still has the steepest steering-head angle in its class (26.7 degrees); in all of motocross, only the Open-class Honda CR, at 26.0 degrees, has a steeper head angle. In fact, the rake this year is a fraction of a degree steeper and the front wheel trail a few millimeters longer than they were in '83 but only because of minor differences in tires and suspension travels; even though the steering head is 5mm lower and 5mm more rearward this year to shift the weight bias toward the front, the fork offset and angle (relative to the frame) are unchanged. The rear section of the frame still unbolts for easy shock access; and this year that rear section—which includes the seat, airbox, silencer, rear fender and numberplates—is interchangeable with those on the CR125 and the CR500 motocross bikes.

Wheels: The twin-piston disc brake up front is similar to the assembly used on last year's XR500R four-stroke—but with a smaller, lighter reservoir and pads with a higher sintered-metal content to help reduce fade during hard usage. Honda claims that the disc setup results in less unsprung weight but more *overall* weight due to the handlebar-mounted reservoir assembly. Both wheels still use straight-pull spokes; but moving the sprocket to the left side of the rear hub has resulted in a larger-diameter spoke flange on that side. This enabled the hub to be made narrower while maintaining the same angularity between the left- and right-side spokes.

SUSPENSION:

Front: The front fork is one of the least-changed aspects of the new CR. Its stanchion-tube diameter still is 43mm, and it retains compression damping that can be adjusted by turning a screw in the bottom of each slider leg. The only differences between this year's fork and last year's are an increase in mid- to high-speed compression damping, and a decrease in medium-speed rebound damping.

Rear: The Pro-Link single-shock rear suspension system has undergone a number of changes, but it still is the



Compression and rebound damping are adjustable on the CR250's Showa shock

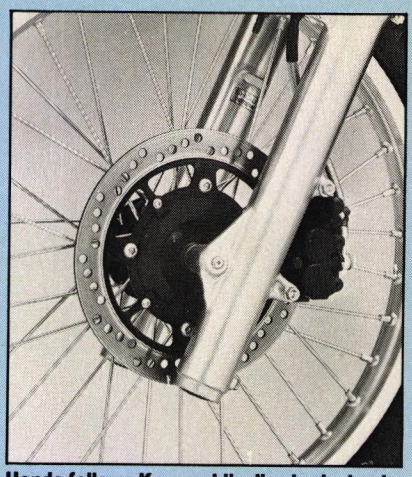
But the rear suspension gets a case of the hots in rough terrain.

same basic rising-rate linkage arrangement it has been since its introduction in 1981. For the third year in a row, however, the linkage geometry has been changed to lower the wheel-to-shock leverge ratio and thus make the system a bit *less* progressive than the year before. And to maintain the same amount of wheel travel as in 1983, the Showa shock itself has 11mm more shaft travel and is 22.5mm longer, and it uses a softer spring. Compression damping still is adjustable with the turn of a knob on the remote reservoir, and rebound damping can be regulated with a screw at the base of the shock body. Some '83 CR shocks had trouble with reservoir hoses blowing off, but that problem allegedly has been rectified with a larger-diameter hose.

DETAILS:

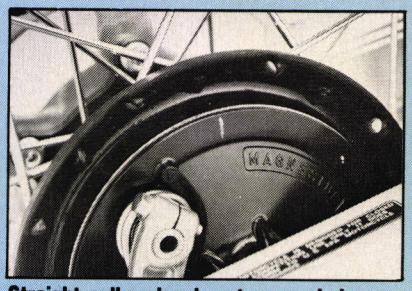
The '84 CR's airbox is more effective at preventing water from entering the intake tract. Other changes include: a rubber-mounted handlebar; wider footpegs; larger-capacity fuel tank; larger numberplates; Bridgestone M37 front and M38 rear tires.

Continued



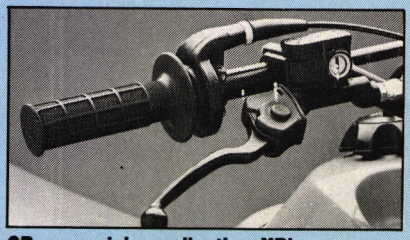
Honda follows Kawasaki's disc brake lead

But the twin pistons are a CR touch.



Straight-pull spokes lace to a new hub

Honda goes straight and narrow.



CR reservoir is smaller than XR's

And packs more power.

Will It Win?

• Some riders will think Honda is riding on thin ice. Completely changing a proven winner like the CR250R is tampering with success, and it's easy to fall from grace in today's MX scene. But the truth of the matter is that those skeptics have nothing to worry about; the new CR was created from the same ingredients that made its predecessor the top berm-smasher in the country.

One of those ingredients is a steering-head angle steeper than anything this side of a trials bike. That helps the CR transmit a feeling of agility while dodging through quick, tight turns. In slow cor-

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Wheel Travel, Front/Rear, In.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias, Front/ Rear, percent	Steering head angle/ Trail, degrees/inches	Transmission, number of speeds
Honda CR250R—'84	11.7/12.2	216	48.4/51.6	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR250R—'83	11.5/12.2	217	48.2/51.8	26.8/4.06	5
Husqvarna 250 CR—'83	11.8/12.7	227	47.4/52.6	30.0/5.51	6
Kawasaki KX250—'83	11.8/12.1	224	48.7/51.3	28.5/4.65	5
Suzuki RM250—'83	10.7/12.4	219	47.9/52.1	29.7/4.84	5
Yamaha YZ250—'83	11.3/12.3	217	47.9/52.1	28.0/4.69	5

ners, where staying on a line or in a deep groove is difficult, no other 250 has an edge on the Honda. In faster turns, though, several other bikes are on par with the CR, among them last year's Kawasaki KX250 and Suzuki RM250. In those turns where speeds are greater and the terrain rougher, quick steering usually is less important than stability.

Even at higher speeds, the CR pays only a small price for its quick-steering habits. The CR is a stable machine, and only shakes its head right after the rider lets off the throttle and hits a series of braking bumps. Even then, the front end shakes only slightly, and the situation can be corrected by a weight shift.

Honda engineers claim it's misleading to equate steep steering head-angles with instability. Improper suspension setup, they say, is a much greater culprit when a bike exhibits poor high-speed handling. And the CR's suspension is *well* thought out. The fork, which is little changed from last year's, still is one of the best. Even when the bike lands flat on the face of an uphill slope, the front end shows little flex and soaks up the impact without complaint.

We experimented extensively with the compression damping adjuster on the fork and found in most cases its effect was subtle. The adjustment range is narrow, and going from one extreme to the other has little effect on how the bike handles over low-speed, choppy bumps. Greater speed and bigger bumps better demonstrate the differences between settings. With the compression damping turned up, bottoming is infrequent and rarely severe. When the adjustment is turned to the other extreme, the ride over medium-size bumps is soft, but the front end also starts to feel vague in the turns. We generally used the higher damping settings, but since the difference between extremes is small, choosing which setting to use is largely a matter of preference.

Our experimentation with the rear suspension yielded similar results. Each rider had his own preference in compression damping settings, but generally the higher positions were the favorites. Whatever setting was used, though, the system *worked*. The leverage ratio and the spring rate have changed this year, but the Pro-Link still has much in common with the '83 system, like its ability to absorb almost everything from rocks and ruts to craters and canyons. We did notice that the new shock tended to heat up more than last year's, possibly due to greater piston speed within the shock caused by the system's reduced leverage. This caused no problems for most of our riders, but an Expert-level tester complained of damping fade after a 25-minute riding session. Still, Novice and Intermediate riders shouldn't have to worry about replacing or modifying the shock—chances are they'll fade before the shock does.

Anyone who rides the CR, Expert or Novice, will agree that the bike's powerband is greatly improved. Engine performance is one area where the difference between the '83 and '84 models is clear, because the standard by which quarter-liter motocrossers are measured once again has been raised. Where last year's CR was smooth, torquey and fast, the '84 model is smoother, torquier and *faster*. Power is plentiful and available throughout an impressively broad range, almost like having the torque of an Open-classer combined with the responsiveness of a 125. This is the type of power that doesn't take an expert to appreciate, just a rider who likes going fast without having to work at it.

You won't have to work at slowing down, either. The new CR stops more quickly and with less effort than did last year's bike. Those riders familiar with the '83 CR's excellent double-leading-shoe front brake might find that hard to believe, but there's no doubt that the new disc front brake is stronger. And on top of that, the new brake is less prone to water- and mud-induced fade. But some riders will require time to adjust to the additional braking power. Stopping never takes more than one finger—grab the brake with a full hand and you're asking for trouble.

After a short adjustment period, though, the brake shows itself to be a real improvement. And that improvement is only one of many. The engine has a broader powerband than last year's motor, and even the new Bridgestone tires are an improvement, offering better traction over a wider range of terrain than last year's rubber. All those improvements mean this is a better motocrosser than the '83 model, and that makes the new CR the best motocrosser, of any displacement, we've ever tested.

But remember, this year will see improved Yamahas and Kawasakis, a redesigned Suzuki, and liquid-cooled bikes from Husqvarna and Maico. So we can only wait to see if the best so far will be the best at the *end* of 1983. Just keep in mind that all those bikes had a long way to go before they could match *last year's* Honda, which was only the starting point for the new CR. —*Ron Lawson*

Ride Review

• If you're waiting for me to play devil's advocate, if you're hoping that I'm the one who will cut through all the bull and tell you the *real* story about the CR250R and why it isn't so wonderful after all, don't hold your breath. Because I think the CR is the greatest thing to hit motocross since the invention of dirt.

Now, I realize that you're probably tired of hearing how yet another bike has become The Best Motocross Machine In The History Of The Entire Universe, but what's a tester to do when he encounters a motorcycle as near-perfect as the CR250R? Lie? Still, I don't want to lose my credibility and have you think that I'm not a competent, hard-nosed, objective tester, so I'm going to reveal all of the CR250R's flaws right here in front of God and everybody. Let's see...uh, the Honda logo on the back of the seat wasn't quite straight, and... oh, yeah, the front tire didn't have quite enough air in it when we got the bike. Okay, so the CR *did* suffer some rear-shock fade, but only when flogged by an extremely fast rider or on a brutally rough track. Otherwise, the CR was a model of perfection.

Actually, there *is* one serious thing wrong with the new CR250Rs that I haven't mentioned: One of them doesn't live at my house. —*Paul Dean*

• Honda's new CR250R is the best motocrosser ever built. Now, I know that's a strong statement, but every time I come in from a ride on the CR I keep finding myself telling everyone how great it is. And that's unusual for me, because as a bike-tester of long standing I tend to be a skeptic. Sure, I'll say some bike is fantastic—if it is—but then qualify the comment by saying better shocks or a wider powerband would make the bike almost perfect.

With the new CR, though, I can't really qualify my statement with any serious criticism. Well, just so you don't forget that I'm a tester, I'll point to the blister on the inside of my right foot and say the new clutch cover could be a little narrower. Apart from that token problem, there really isn't anything I'd want to change. Not that I didn't try screwing things up; I adjusted the suspension from one extreme to the other, and while one setting seemed to work best, even the worst setting was, by any standards, acceptable. The trouble is, all the other standards don't mean much anymore. The CR *is* the new standard. Nothing else can compare, and if the other manufacturers' '84 MXers are as good, and as devoid of nits to be picked as the CR, I'm going to have to look for another line of work. —*David Dewhurst*

Continued

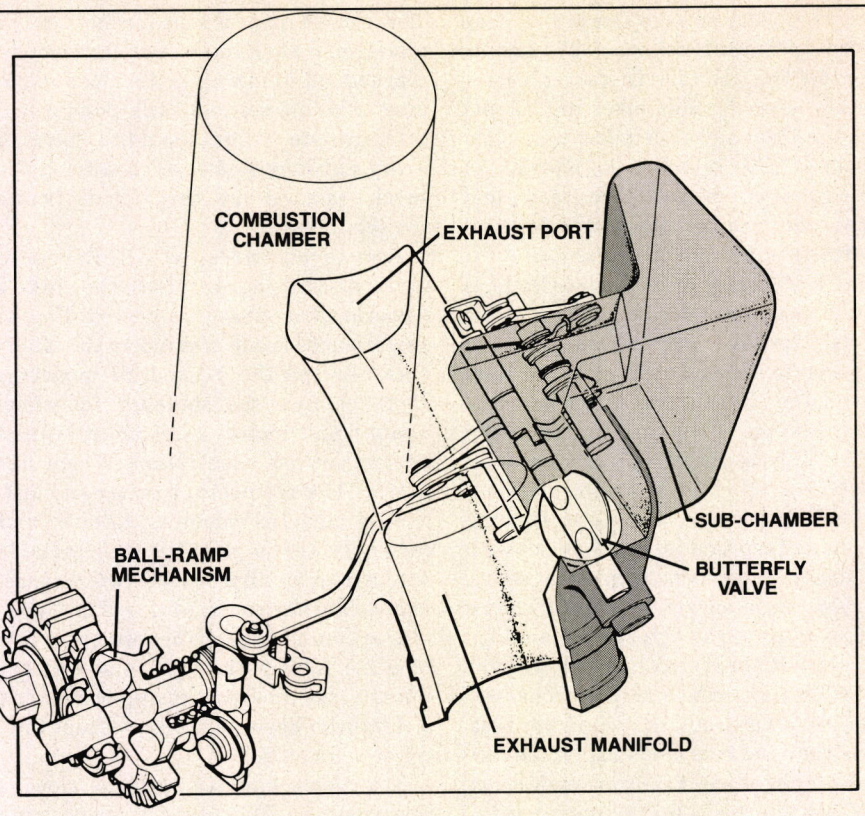
ATAC: Latest Course In The Free Lunch

• Power valves, twin carburetors, oval venturis—they're all very different systems but they all have a common goal: the Free Lunch.

You see, getting more top-end power without paying a price in low-end performance can be tricky. With conventional tuning techniques, ports can be moved and pipes can be reshaped, but the best that can be hoped for is a one-for-one, top-for-bottom trade-off. Which explains why so many *un*conventional systems are appearing, hungry for some free horsepower. And now Honda is sitting down at the table with its own Free Lunch scheme: The Automatic Torque Amplification Chamber, or ATAC, as Honda has dubbed it.

Don't, however, call the ATAC a "power valve." Even though Honda's system has the same goal as Yamaha's Power Valve System (YPVS), the two approaches are worlds apart. The YPVS arrangement alters the height of the exhaust port according to engine speed, lowering it for better torque output at low revs and raising it for more power at high rpm. The ATAC system, on the other hand, alters the volume of the exhaust header pipe according to engine speed, increasing it for better low-end performance and decreasing it for optimum high-rpm power.

The key to understanding Honda's system lies in the way exhaust shock-waves travel through a typical two-stroke's expansion chamber. As the waves leave the exhaust port, they first create a low-pressure condition in their wake, then are reflected back toward the exhaust port so they create a *high*-pressure condition. And if the waves are timed properly, the low pressure will occur at precisely the right moment to help extract the burned gases from the combustion chamber, and the high pressure will occur at the exact instant required to help prevent the escape of fresh mixture through the port window.



There's a catch, of course, which is that engine speeds (which determine the frequency of the waves) vary, whereas pipe dimensions (which control the timing of the waves) are fixed, meaning that any given exhaust-system dimensions are optimum only for one certain rpm range. Except if, as on the CR250R, the exhaust incorporates the ATAC system, which can provide suitable exhaust-system tuning in *two* different rpm ranges.

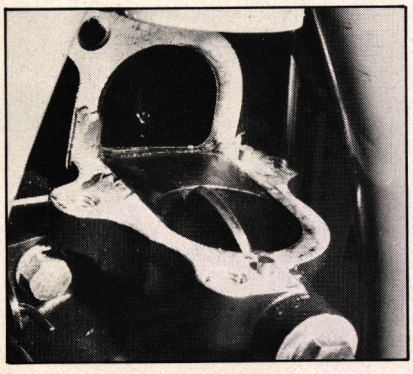
Mechanically, the way in which the ATAC system works isn't much different from that of the YPVS. Behind the water pump is a gear-driven ball-ramp mechanism that is spun by the crankshaft and connected, through a system of links and pivots, to a butterfly valve between the exhaust manifold and a separate chamber measuring—on the CR250R, anyway—170cc in volume. At low rpm, the butterfly is open, and so the effective volume of the expansion chamber's header pipe (and thus the timing of the exhaust system) is increased. But as engine speed picks up, centrifugal force flings the mechanism's four ball-bearings outward, which in turn pushes the linkage and closes the butterfly, removing the chamber from the exhaust system.

This means that the basic expansion-chamber dimensions can be calculated to yield maximum top-end power, but the ATAC will change the effective header-pipe volume at low revs so that the system then bolsters low-end torque. Honda claims that the boost in low-rev power comes between 3500 and 6000 rpm, and that taking the ATAC out of the system would result in a two-horsepower loss at 5000 rpm.

We found nothing during our testing to refute those claims, although we do have reservations about reliability. Yamaha's Power Valve System (which uses a ball-ramp and linkage arrangement much like the ATAC's) requires that the two pivot points in its linkage be kept well-lubricated; otherwise, free-play develops in the linkage and the horsepower output drops noticeably. But the ATAC system has *nine* pivot points, most of which are more difficult to service than the Yamaha's. Granted, free-play in the ATAC probably won't have as much negative effect as it does in the YPVS, but one way or another, the power output will suffer.

But that's a risk we'll all have to take, since more powerband-broadening innovations—the Free Lunch—are apparently on the way. And while this one might seem like just a quick answer to Yamaha's system, it actually appears to work more effectively, showing that in Honda's opinion, the best defense is an all-out ATAC.

—Ron Lawson



Honda's answer to the YPVS

The best defense is a good ATAC.

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda CR250R — motocross

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company Inc, 100 West Alondra Boulevard, Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2418

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement . . . . . one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke . . . . . 66.0mm x 72.0mm
Displacement 246.3cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 8.6:1
Carburetion . . . . . one 36mm Keihin slide/needle
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system . . . . . primary kick
Ignition . . . . . flywheel-magneto CDI
Charging system . . . . . none

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 3.000:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.643:1 (51/14) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	1.800	19.671	3.99
II	1.470	16.065	4.89
III	1.210	13.224	5.94
IV	1.000	10.929	7.19
V	0.833	9.103	8.63

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Showa air-spring, 43mm stanchion-tube diameter, 14-position adjustable compression damping/11.7 in. (298mm)
Rear . . . . . single Showa shock, 17-position adjustable compression damping, 22-position adjustable rebound damping, 18mm spring preload range/12.2 in. (309mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.3 in. (236mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe, straight-pull cable-operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 90/90-21 Bridgestone Motocross M37
Rear . . . . . 130/80-18 Bridgestone Motocross M38

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

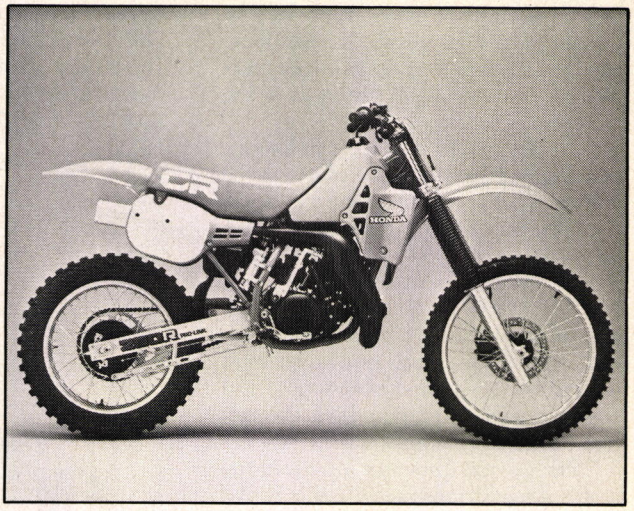
Weight . . . . . 216 lbs. (98.0kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 48.4% front, 51.6% rear
Wheelbase . . . . . 57.8 to 59.2 in. (1467 to 1504mm)
Seat height . . . . . 37.7 in. (958mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 31.7 in. (805mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 16.9 in. (428mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 13.4 in. (339mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle . . . . . 26.7 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.13 in. (105mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank . . . . . plastic, 2.4 gal. (9.0l), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . none

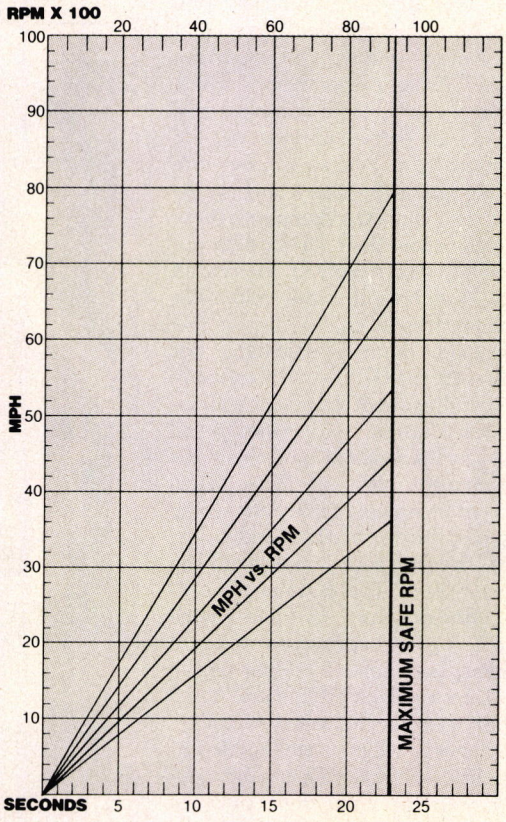
PERFORMANCE

Top speed (observed) . . . . . 79 mph (127 km/h)

WARRANTY: none

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only





PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Koni Series 7610 Shock Absorbers

Turning a savage samurai into a city slicker.

• If you were to say that Suzuki's liter-class Katana has a ride that is as harsh as its styling is unusual, you'd get few arguments. The fact is that although this Muth-styled sportbike handles superbly, both the 1100cc 1983 version and, in particular, the 1000cc '82 model can beat a rider to a pulp unless he travels only the shortest of distances or the smoothest of roads.

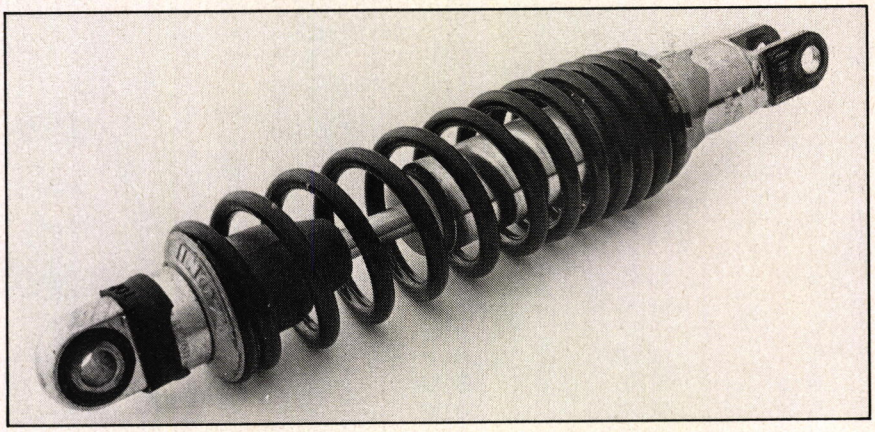
Or installs more-civilized rear shocks, thus eliminating the prime source of the Katana's harsh ride. And worthy candidates for that particular job are the new 7610-series shocks from Koni. We bolted a set of these rear-suspension units on a 1983 GS1100S Katana, and they instantly transformed the bike from a literal pain in the butt into a pleasant mount for all-around street use; and they did so without damaging the machine's handling competence.

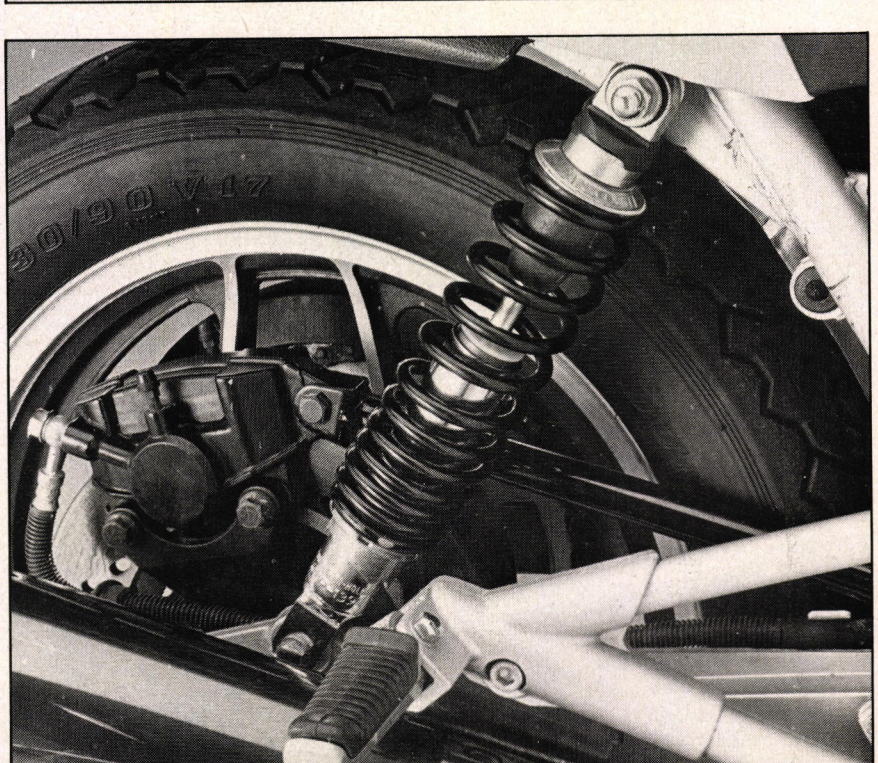
This transformation involves no techno-magic, since the 7610 shocks are, internally, very similar in design and operation to the Koni dampers that were so popular back in the late Sixties and early Seventies—but with an important difference. Those earlier Konis, which pioneered the adjustable-damping concept, required partial disassembly for adjustment (you had to remove the spring, compress the shock and rotate the shaft to change the damping); these new models allow their rebound damping to be adjusted simply by turning an external thumbwheel right below the upper mounting eyelet.

This type of damping adjuster is not original, since the OEM shocks on many bikes (including the Katana) use a virtually identical design. Neither are the triple-rate springs coiled around the 7610s new in concept, although Koni claims that its use of a single three-rate spring (as opposed to two or three individual springs) on each shock is unique in the motorcycle field. The Katana replacement shocks are shipped with 100/145/185-pound springs as standard equipment, but numerous other triple-rate coils are available from Koni.

Despite their lack of new technology, the 7610 shocks effect a remarkable improvement in the Katana's comfort quotient, mostly because their rates of springing and damping are more realistic than are those of the stock Kayaba shocks. With the spring preload set on the lowest (of three) position and the damping adjuster on either the first- or second-softest (of four) setting, the S-model Suzuki rides almost as comfortably as its more-civilian counterpart, the GS1100E. Small-but-abrupt bumps and ripples are absorbed nicely rather than jouncing the rider up and down as they do with the original shocks in place; yet due to the "progressive" action provided by the triple-rate springs, rarely is there any bottoming.

Those aforementioned settings work best for average riders under average conditions; but if you're above-average in size, or if you ride the backroads more aggressively than most, the preload and the damping both will need to be increased. We prefer the combination of





PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

External rebound-damping adjustment and triple-rate springs update Koni's classic shock

And transform the Katana's ride from buckboard-hard to almost boulevard-plush.

the middle preload setting and the No. 4 damping position, which results in smooth-road cornering equivalent to that delivered by the stock shocks, but *rough*-road handling that is far superior. And even at those settings, the ride is significantly better than with the Kayabas.

Turning up the preload on the Konis to the highest position, though, has disproportionately negative effects. At that setting, the softest coils in the tri-rate springs are practically coil-bound at full extension, so only the two stiffest rates are at work. That gives a harsh ride similar to what the stock shocks provide. What's more, the firmest damping setting supplies barely enough rebound to cope with all of that preload, so the rear suspension often extends too quickly after absorbing a big impact.

Therein lies our biggest complaint about the 7610 shocks: Anyone who *needs* that highest preload, or who is big/fast enough (such as a 200-pound production-class racer) to require stiffer optional springs, will find that the Konis don't have sufficient damping to suit his needs. Frankly, he'd be better off with the stock shocks. Racer-types also need to consider that the Konis are 10mm shorter eye-to-eye (325mm vs. 335mm) than the Kayabas, which can compound the cornering-clearance problems suffered by 1100cc Suzukis. Thankfully, though, the triple-rate springs are firm enough in mid-stroke to limit suspension compression during fast cornering; thus a Koni-equipped Katana won't drag its undercarriage much more often than the stock bike will on the street, although it will do so quite a bit *more* often on the track.

But in all fairness, the 7610s are touted not as racing shocks but as street shocks; and in that capacity, they are quite effective—on big-bore Suzuki Katanas, at least. Koni claims it can supply 7610s for almost any twin-shock streetbike made in recent years, but we have no idea how well the shocks might work on any of those machines. We *can* say that on the Katanas in question, they effect an improvement in all-around streetability that is well worth the $199.95 expense. And Koni's amazing *lifetime* warranty (free replacement if the dampers or springs fail during the original owner's lifetime) is just icing on the cake.

Sore-bunned Katana riders might find that an offer they can't refuse. If so, they should be able to obtain the 7610 Konis through just about any motorcycle dealership. If that approach fails, they can contact Koni America Inc., 111 West Lovers Lane, Culpeper, Virginia 22701; (703) 825-4543. —*Paul Dean*

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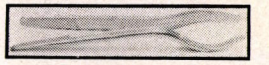

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

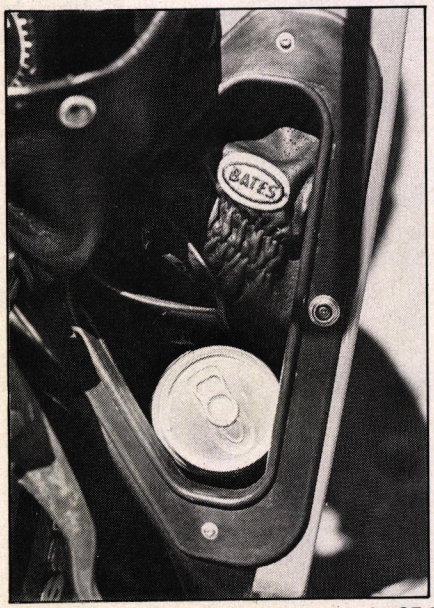
Shoei GF-2 Fairing

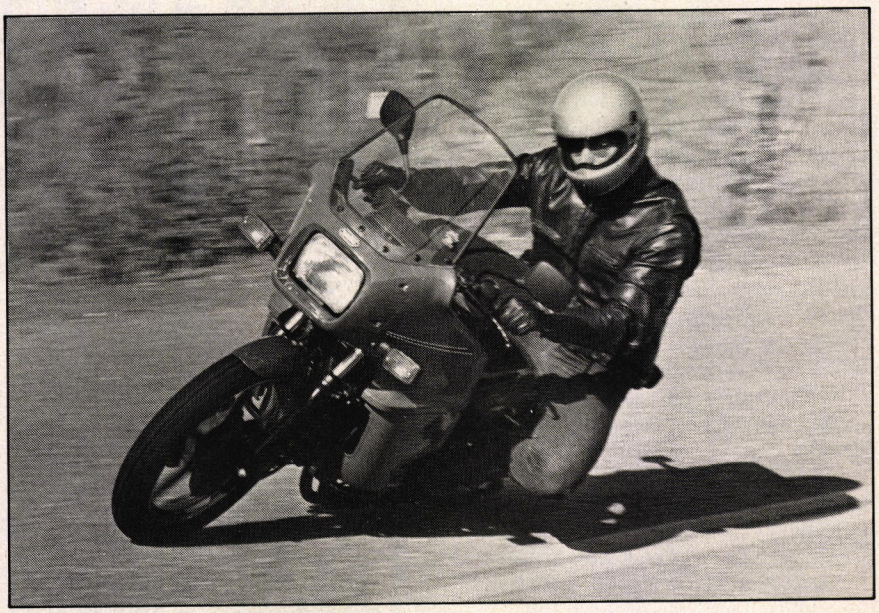
Tour tech in midsize trim.

• Sport-touring is nothing new, but until recently it has been a small category in the American touring market. But as the big-bore clipper ships have become more fully fitted with touring gear at the factory, accessory makers have taken a second look at sport-touring as a growth market.

American-style touring has concentrated on comfort as the primary goal, but sport-touring imposes a different set of priorities. So, too; are the priorities different in outfitting a sport-tourer: enhancing the bike's long-distance character while maintaining its sporting ability. It's a fine line to walk—or ride—and not every accessory can cut it; one that can is the Shoei GF-2 fairing, a frame-mount, fiberglass unit that weighs just under 15 pounds. The GF-2 features its own turnsignals, an integral rectangular headlight and removable lowers. There are also two fairing pockets with vinyl tonneau covers. It's designed to strike an attractive balance of size, weight, aerodynamics, style and rider comfort.

To test the success of the GF-2 in achieving that balance, we mounted it on a Kawasaki GPz550. The rationale was simple: If the fairing satisfied the form/function equation on a street-scratcher like the GPz, its design objective would be well-met. Normal installation of the GF-2 should take about two hours; the mounting instructions are well-illustrated and easy to follow. In the case of our GPz test bike, however, Shoei didn't have a mounting bracket for a 1982 bike on hand and it was necessary to fit a 1981 mounting kit. There was enough of a difference between the model years that some minor hacksaw





PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 T.J. RAFFERTY

With styling, performance and storage, the GF-2 combines the desirable features of touring and sport.

Keeping all three balls in the air in the juggling act known as sport-touring.

work on the bracket was needed to mount the unit. The only other glitch we encountered was a mismatch between the fairing's turnsignal connectors and the smaller connectors on the bike's wires. As a glitch, it was of small proportion; the bike's connectors were replaced easily, and Shoei is expected to provide adaptors in future hardware kits.

An easy installation is useful but hardly satisfies our criteria for sport-touring. On-road performance is the best indicator. And in use, the GF-2 fulfills the comfort criterion, giving good upper body protection, despite its narrow width. The windshield extends to about 2 inches below eye level for a 5-foot-10 rider, there's little helmet turbulence at speed, and the lowers give moderate shielding to the knees and shins. Naturally, the calm-air pouch the GF-2 provides is neither as large nor as still as the pocket behind a full touring fairing, but it is a comfort on a long ride. And the GF-2 doesn't produce annoying backpressure that pushes you stoop-shouldered down the road.

In addition to providing good rider protection, the fairing generated no serious ill-effects on the GPz's handling. Steering effort with the fairing in place was only slightly greater than on the stock, bikini-faired bike, and the fairing demanded no quick heroics, even in really nasty sidewinds. The complete fairing *does* produce one unpleasant side-effect, though: heat. When temperatures get up into the 80s, the fairing lowers allow a considerable amount of engine heat to build up around the rider's legs. We found that for summer riding, especially in slow traffic, it was best to leave the lowers at home.

Overall, the GF-2 seems a handsome complement to the GPz—or any number of potential sport-tourers. Our test bike's long-range comfort was improved considerably, and the Kawasaki's sporting traits were diminished only slightly. With the fairing in place, the GPz's boy-racer profile *is*, of course, altered, and the fairing doesn't offer all the features of a full-on touring fairing—but that's not the GF-2's intent. By today's standard of fit, finish, and especially performance, the GF-2 gets high marks.

Shoei claims that the GF-2 will fit virtually every Japanese bike in the 400cc-to-750cc range, either with bracketry catered to specific bikes or with Shoei's universal hardware. The GF-2 is offered in red, black, maroon, silver and metallic blue. Suggested retail price for the GF-2 is $500, including lowers. The GF-2 is available through Shoei dealers, or directly through Shoei Corp., Dept. CG, 1717 Pontius St., Los Angeles, CA 90025; (213) 477-6051. —*T.J. Rafferty*

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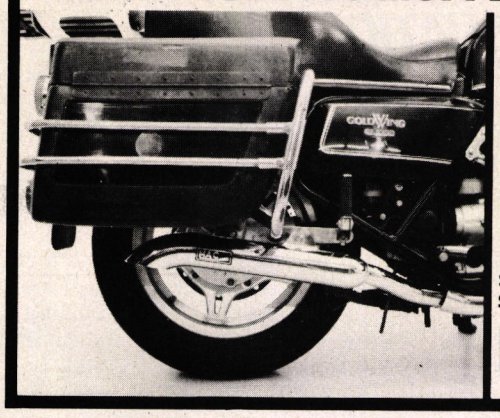

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

AEROPAC by Chase Harper

A sense of simplicity in soft bags.

• If you're looking for a less-is-more kind of soft luggage, consider the Chase Harper Aeropac ensemble. It's a four-piece, mid-sized system made of Cordura nylon, consisting of a tankbag, trunk and saddlebags.

Each bag features a dual-zipper flap, secured at the rear by a Velcro strip. Carrying straps on the tankbag and trunk are just below the flap on each bag, while the saddlebags' handles are mounted topside.

Both the trunk and saddlebags are kept in shape by ABS-plastic stiffeners, while the tankbag gets more flexible support from a closed-cell-foam liner. All of the liners are removable and the bags are washable. Color range is the same as with Ford's original Model-T: any color you want as long as it's black.

Aeropac's tankbag, which retails for $59.95, has a 1000-cubic-inch capacity and a 7-by-11-inch clear-plastic map holder. The bottom is covered in Velora, a dense foam, to protect the tank's paint. We opted for the optional foam liner ($3.50), and cut out sections for a camera, lenses and tape player. This took up only about one-third of the tankbag's volume, so there was plenty of room left for other personal items.

The saddlebags, which retail for $89.95, offer a total volume of 2500 cubic inches, and each bag will hold a helmet. When the bags aren't busy holding headgear, they'll carry a week's worth of clothes, more or less. The trunk will take up the slack, accommodating 1650 cubic inches of whatever you choose to stuff it with; it sells for $53.95. The Aeropac ensemble is available at motorcycle dealers or through Chase Harper, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 4098, Santa Barbara, California 93103; (805) 962-3238.

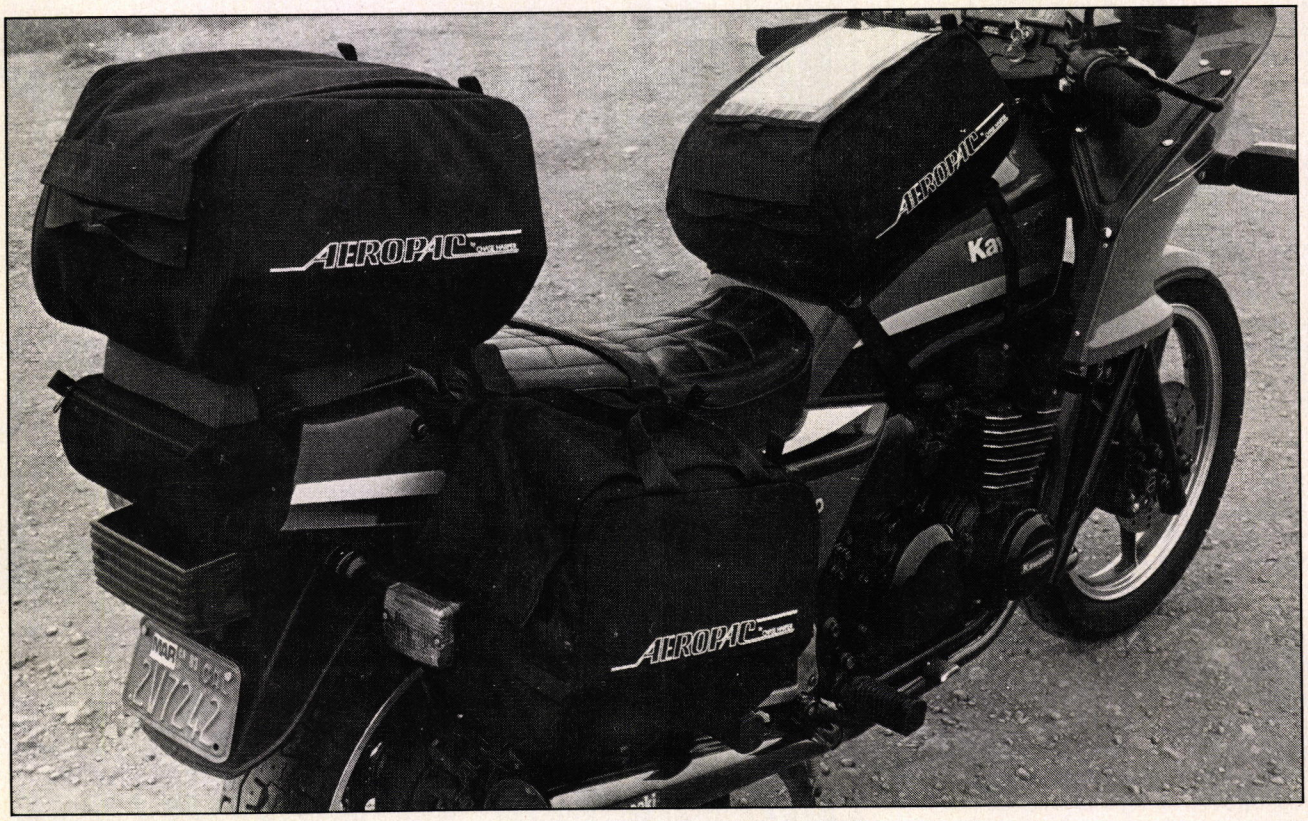
The keynote to the Aeropac system is simplicity. The saddlebags fasten across the seat with Velcro-backed straps, while at the lower front and rear, smaller straps connect via Fastex quick-release buckles to corresponding straps looped around the bike's frame. It's an uncomplicated mounting system, adaptable to almost any bike and holds the bags snugly. The same can be said for the trunk's mounting arrangement: Four straps with fixed buckles secure the trunk to either a luggage rack or the seat.

As useful as the quick-release mounting system for the saddlebags and trunk is, though, the tankbag gets the award for clever attachment. It has four lift-tab buckles, one at each corner. Each strap-end has a Quick Clip, a plastic-coated, U-shaped aluminum clasp that slips over the bottom edge-seam of the fuel tank. And the system works; the Quick Clips keep the tankbag in place under the most adverse conditions.

Access to the contents of any Aeropac bag is easy; simply pull the flap up and forward, and the zippers track open in tandem. The flaps also overlap the zippers, to help keep water out. Full-on gullywashers might require Aeropac's optional saddlebag rain covers, however, which sell for $23.95.

After several thousand miles of semi-abusive use, the Aeropacs are holding up well. They haven't loosened up, fallen off or caused any handling problems when fully loaded. And the clever mounting systems mean your bike needn't be saddled with excess baggage when you want to take shorter-duration trips. It's a case where less complexity makes for more convenience. Simplicity works.

—T.J. Rafferty



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Chase Harper's Aeropac soft bags give occasional tourers a simple, no-frills, easy-on-and-off luggage system

And the Chase Harper solution to matched soft luggage is cheaper than Gucci's.

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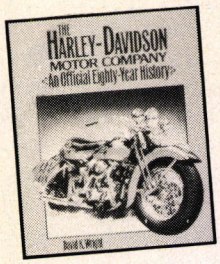

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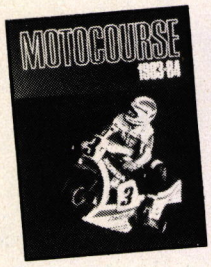

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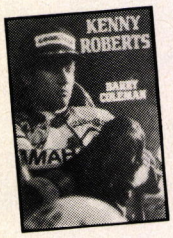

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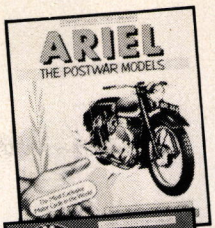

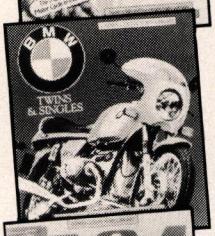

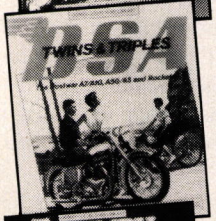

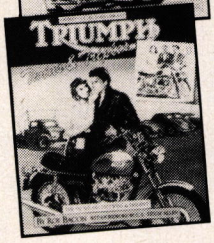

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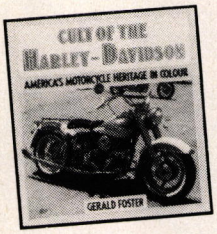

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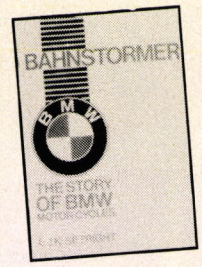

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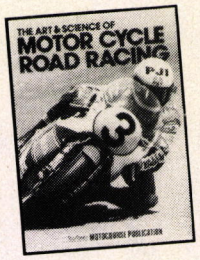

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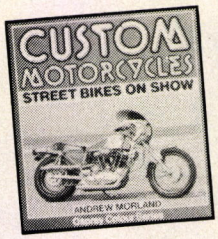

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RIDING IMPRESSION:

Yamaha RZ350

For street, for racing, but not for America—yet.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

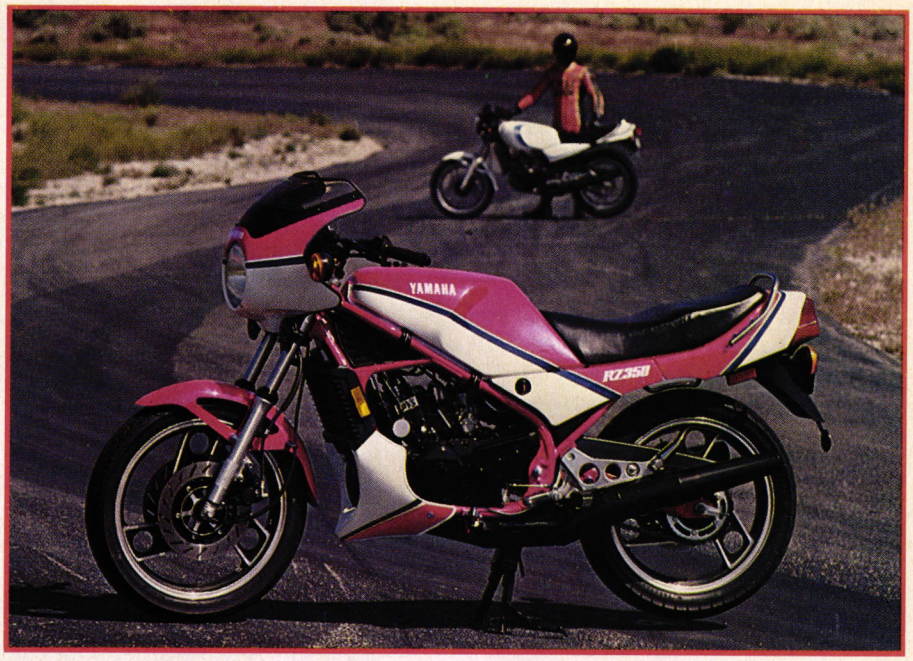
Traditionally, Yamaha has reserved the letter "Z" exclusively for its over-the-counter racing bikes. YZs do it in the dirt, while TZs take their turns on the asphalt. Yamaha maintains the attitude that if it's a racer you want, you'll get it, prominently marked with a "Z." That letter designation is uncompromised—that is, unless you're talking about RDs. RDs, you see, are streetbikes, but streetbikes that, by virtue of their extensive use in F2 and club racing, occupy a gray area between full-on racers and street-only machines.

Despite the RD's widespread racetrack use, though, Yamaha's position on the little two-stroke has always remained the same: It's a streetbike, nothing else. And so, since 1973, RD Yamahas have remained, well, RD Yamahas. That's finally changed, though, because the latest model—the second-generation RD350L/C—is called the RZ350. And the RZ350 is like no other RD-based Yamaha: It looks—and behaves—much like a genuine roadracer.

In short, the RZ350 is closer to be-

ing a racer than any RD-series model ever was, closer, even, than most RD-fans thought an RD-based bike *could* be. That closeness comes in the form of roadrace techno-trickery remarkably similar to that found on Yamaha's over-the-counter GP bike, the TZ250. The similarities between RZ and TZ include a low-boy, wide-line frame with Monocross rising-rate suspension; a liquid-cooled engine that uses Yamaha's Power Valve System; and bodywork that resembles the armor found on the TZ. And while the RZ's 347cc engine is *based* on the previous RD350L/C design, some of its pieces—including cylinders and heads—are similar to the TZ250's.

That being the case, you could reasonably assume that the RZ and TZ would produce similar horsepower outputs. You wouldn't be wrong; while there's still a horsepower difference between absolute racer and absolutely the best two-stroke repliracer ever built, the difference is not as great as you might expect. Yamaha claims 59 brake horsepower for the TZ350, while the TZ roadracer pumps out about 65 in stock form. Since the RD350L/C produced only a claimed 47 horsepower, the RZ is charting waters no other RD-based bike has ever seen.



A 12-horsepower gain over the RD350L/C is only part of the good news. Gone is the toggle-switch power delivery of the L/C, thanks to the way the Yamaha Power Valve System (YPVS) broadens the powerband at the lower end of the RZ's 9300-rpm range. The result is a quick-revving engine—a familiar RD trait—but one with tractability like a four-stroke, making the RZ the most streetworthy RD-based Yamaha ever.

Finding that goodness on American streets could prove somewhat difficult, though, since this red, white and blue missile is sold only in Europe, Canada, Australia and, of couse, Japan. But an evaluation of the best two-stroke repliracer was too compelling to resist, so we didn't even try to resist it; we obtained a privately owned RZ350 for a riding impression. Our test bike surfaced in the form of a fresh-from-the-crate RZ owned by Randy Swenson, a Canadian rider who spared no effort in pointing out to us that two-strokes in Canada are as plentiful as flannel shirts.

Our test with the RZ involved several hundred miles of street riding, as well as a full track session at Willow Springs Raceway, our ultimate test laboratory for evaluating bikes such as the RZ350. That track time was important, since everything about the RZ screams to be turned loose on a racetrack. From its bullet-nose fairing to the upswept, street-legal expansion chamber exhausts, the RZ leaves little room for doubt about its intended role in life. This is no mere hollow shell of a repliracer; the RZ's liquid-cooled engine and Monocross rear suspension clearly are the results of Yamaha's racetrack experience with the TZ. That heritage is even evident in the RZ's instrument cluster—a 10,000-rpm tachometer holds center stage on the fairing-mounted dashboard, flanked by a smaller-diameter water-temperature gauge and 140-mph speedometer.

Indeed, everything about the RZ says performance, save for its OEM Yokohama tires, the same low-performance rubber that was on the RD350L/C we tested in the December 1980 issue of CYCLE GUIDE. Our experience showed that these tires fell short of the L/C's capabilities, and were the greatest limiting factor in the L/C's competence at speed. So we wasted no time in replacing the Yokohamas with what racetrack experience with RD-based bikes had shown would work the best: a Michelin S41-series 3.25-18 on the front (in the softest compound available, FV11), and a Pirelli Gordon 4.10-18 for the rear. Tire pressure was 32 psi at each end.

Only a few laps were required to dial-in the suspension, in part because the RZ was working flawlessly, and in part because there are only two suspension adjustments: fork air pressure and rear spring preload. The remote preload adjuster is tucked inside the right sidecover,

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY© 1983 DAVID DEWHURST

and connects via a Gilmer belt to the preload cam atop the RZ's single shock. We found that with a 150-pound rider, the bike handled best with preload on the fourth-highest of five settings, and fork air pressure at 15 psi, well within the recommended 5-to-17.5-psi range.

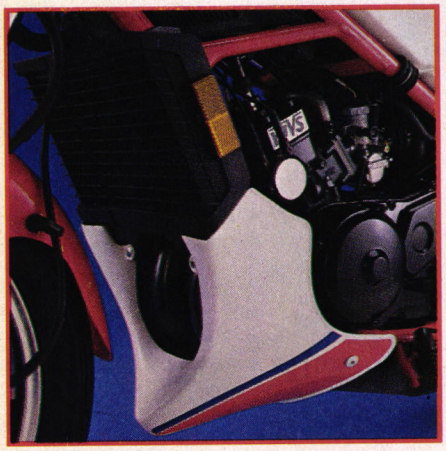
With good tires and the suspension sorted out, the RZ clearly delivers on its visual promise of roadraciness. The 325-pound bike wouldn't wiggle through any of Willow Springs' nine turns. Even Turn Eight, a fast righthand sweeper pockmarked with bumps, could be taken flat-out in top gear. The RZ didn't chatter or alter course through the fourth-gear Turn Nine dip, nor did the rear tire want to break loose on the uphill Turn Two sweeper, a fast, 180-degree bend in the track that bottoms the suspension of twin-shock RDs.

And in typical RD-tradition, the RZ heads for the apex of a turn almost as if the bike had been preprogrammed for the course. Thanks to the RZ's quick steering, there's no need for body english to direct the bike to the apex, either. In fact, the RZ is so nimble that it's easy to inadvertently turn *too* sharply until you become acclimated to the quick handling.

Our track session told us another thing, too: The RZ350 is geared too high for the 2.5-mile course. The RZ has a 17-tooth countershaft sprocket, while the L/C had only a 16 (both have 39-tooth rear sprockets). The RZ couldn't reach its 9300-rpm redline in top gear at Willow, even on the downhill back straight. In comparison, the L/C pegged its tachometer in top gear on both the front and back straights, fully utilizing its power.

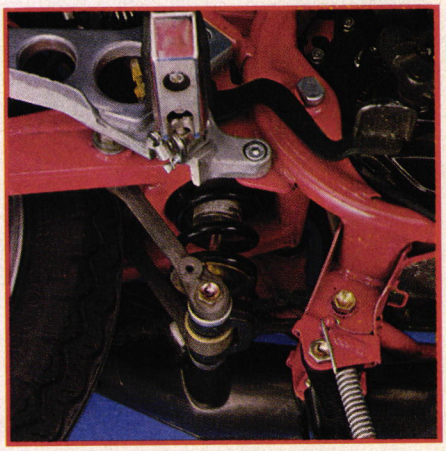
While the RZ's tall gearing might be ideal for a flat-out run on a German autobahn, allowing the bike to maintain a high speed with the engine seemingly loafing, it certainly didn't help our lap times at Willow. The best lap turned was 1:45.5-seconds. With lower gearing, the RZ would easily be good for 1:43s. The 1981 L/C produced 1:45s, and our Project Boss Stock BD400F of 1979 (equipped with Dunlop R-compound K81 tires and S&W shocks) lapped Willow at 1:46.1 during a club race.

While the joy of the RZ is riding it hard, especially on a racetrack, its beauty is the engine. Like practically every other



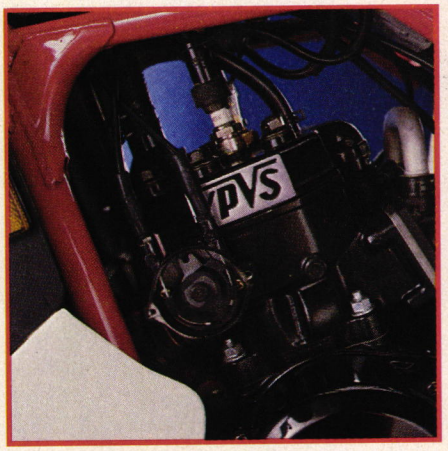
Radiator is dressed with a shovel fairing

A matter of function with form.



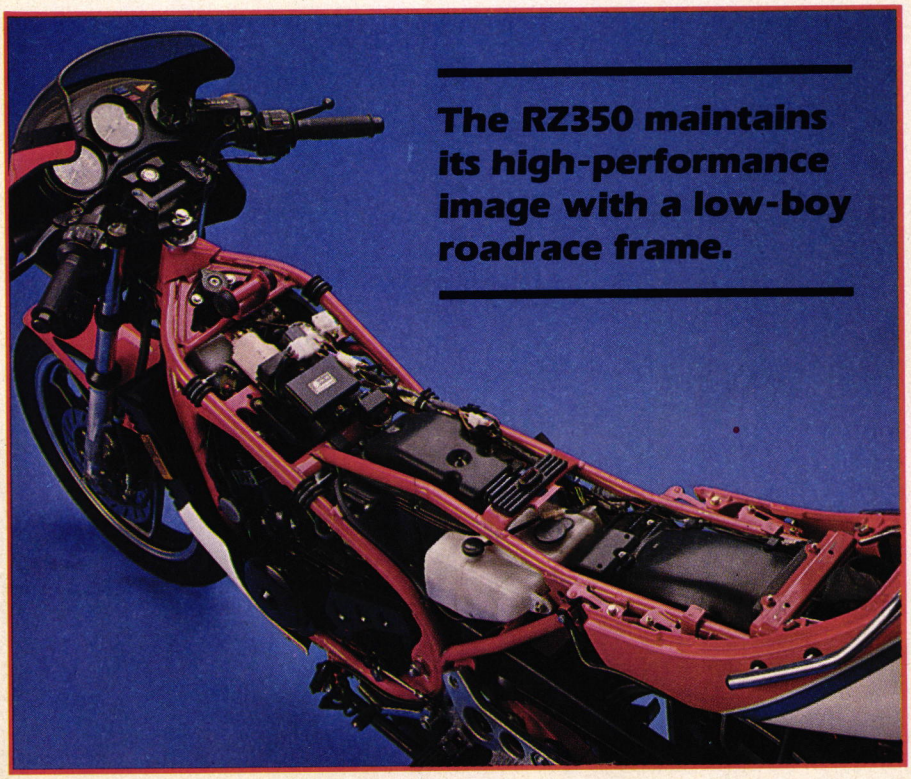
Mono-X shock absorber mounts low

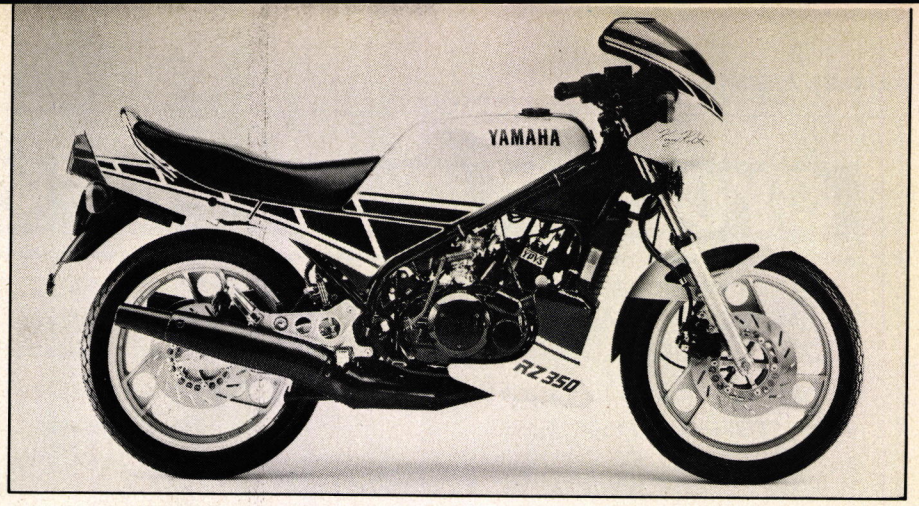
The RZ's link to the TZ-world.



Power Valve cable mechanism

Pushing and pulling for more power.





350cc two-stroke from Yamaha, the internal cylinder dimensions remain 64mm x 54mm. But the liquid-cooled twin has been revamped from its immediate predecessor with the addition of separate cylinders (rather than the one-piece block) and, more importantly, the Yamaha Power Valve System.

On the RZ, the Power Valve System serves the same purpose it has on recent YZs and TZs: to broaden the powerband by varying exhaust-port timing according to engine rpm. And even the execution of the system inside the engine is the same on all other Z-bikes. In each of the RZ's exhaust ports, just above the upper edge of the exhaust-port window, is the power valve, a waisted cylinder with a cutaway on one side that runs the width of the port. The cylinder is rotated slightly according to engine rpm, which repositions the cutaway and so raises or lowers the effective height of the exhaust port.

But while the function of the valves is the same in all YPVS systems, the way in which they're controlled is not. The YZ motocrosser's system is purely mechanical, in that the valve's position is determined by a linkage connected to a centrifugal ball-ramp geared to the crankshaft. On the RZs and TZs, the movement of the power valves is also mechanical, relying on two cables connected to a servo motor under the gas tank—one cable to advance the valve, one to retard it. The difference is that the motor/cable setup is controlled by a microprocessor that reads engine rpm electronically through ignition pulses. On the RZ, the microprocessor positions the power valve to provide the lowest effective port-height with the engine spinning below 3500 rpm. Above that speed, the valve is rotated until the maximum effective port-height is attained at 6500 rpm.

What all this electromechanical mumbo jumbo means is that the RZ's designers were free to tune the engine for optimum power at high rpm without sacrificing the usual amount of lower-rpm power in the process. Because even though engine tuning entails more than just exhaust-port dimensions, being able to vary exhaust-port height according to engine speed can result in more power at both extremes of the rpm-scale. Even the RD350L/C, despite its absence of power valves, could have been tuned to produce either just as much top-end or bottom-end power as the RZ—but not both.

The resultant wide powerband is especially apparent when accelerating the RZ slowly from a stop. For not only will the engine pull more strongly than that of any RD350/400 just off idle, but less clutch-slippage is needed as well.

Yet, despite having more low-end power than previous Yamaha two-stroke streetbikes, the RZ needs lower final-drive gearing just as much for the street as it does for the track. The initial four gears serve well for commuter riding, but the upper two are less useful, with fifth serving as an overdrive, and sixth as an *overdose*; the RZ's engine just can't pull top gear at speeds below 65 mph.

Gearing even hampers the RZ350 at the dragstrip. Like most small-bore streetbikes, the RZ requires considerable clutch-slippage to obtain the best launch—too much slippage, in fact. Because every time the clutch was released at a reasonable distance down the strip, the engine bogged momentarily, power valves or no. Despite that limitation, the RZ still bettered the RD350/LC's quarter-mile times by almost one-half second. Had we ridden the clutch really hard, the RZ could have produced even better times, but the bike wasn't ours—and it *is* a long way to Canada for spare parts.

But let's keep things in perspective, here. The RZ350 is not and was never intended to be a dragracer; and although Yamaha clearly sought to establish a new standard of performance in production roadracing with the RZ, the machine is a streetbike first and a racer second. And as a street-going sport motorcycle, the RZ350 not only eclipses the RD350L/C, it makes all other RD Yamahas seem like refugees from a vintage-bike race.

Now, all that praise might seem a bit like salt applied liberally to an open wound. After all, this RZ is not a U.S model, and you can't simply drop into any Yamaha dealership and ride out on a red, white and blue wrist-rocket like this one. But from where we sit, this RZ doesn't have even the slightest taste of sour grapes about it. Because soon—very soon—Yamaha dealers will be showing an RZ350 you *can* lay your hands on (see Guide Lines, page 31), a yellow-and-black two-stroke rocket that, like the RZ we tested, produces a claimed 59 horsepower. And if you want to consider that '84 RZ your very own personal GP bike, go right ahead. After all, like Yamaha's other over-the-counter racers, this 350 carries the "Z" designation—and deserves it. •

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Yamaha RZ350LC-'83	13.343/98.46	112	346	N/A
Honda VF400F-'83	13.588/96.35	112	402	127
Suzuki GS450E-'83	14.236/93.16	106†	384	131
Honda CBX400-'82	13.588/96.46	110	402	128
Yamaha XS400 Seca-'82	14.589/89.28	110†	382	140
Yamaha RD350LC-'80	13.78/79.57	113†	328	126

† indicates a calculated top speed

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Yamaha RZ350LC — street

IMPORTER: Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd., 480 Gordon Baker Road, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2H 3B4

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2999

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled two-stroke transverse vertical twin
Port arrangement . . . . . one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one variable-height exhaust
Bore and stroke . . . . . 64.0mm x 54.0mm
Displacement 347.4cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 6.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 10,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . .two 26mm Mikuni slide/needle
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . .oil injection
Starting system . . . . . primary kick
Ignition . . . . . .transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . .12-volt; 200-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 5.5-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 2.879:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #520 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 1/4-in. width); 2.294:1 (39/17) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.57	16.921	4.39
II	1.77	11.654	6.38
III	1.31	8.625	8.62
IV	1.08	7.111	10.45
V	0.96	6.321	11.76
VI	0.88	5.794	12.83

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . .Showa air-spring, 35mm stanchion tube diameter/5.2 in. (132mm)
Rear . . . . . .single Yamaha shock, 5-position adjustable spring preload/4.3 in. (110mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.5-in. (266mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.4-in. (263mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 90/90-18 51H Yokohama Y-984
Rear . . . . . 110/80-18 58H Yokohama Y-996

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

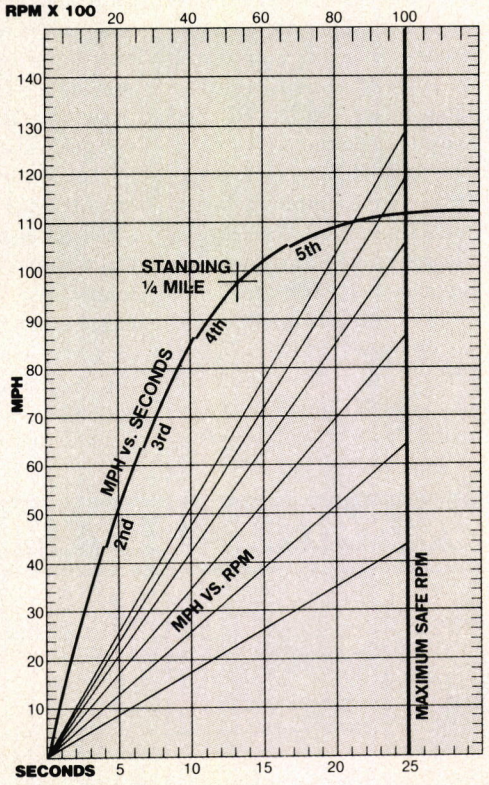
Weight . . . . . .346 lbs. (156.9kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . .46.7 % front, 53.3 % rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 827 lbs. (375kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 448 lbs. (203kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . .53.9 in. to 54.8 in. (1370 to 1392mm)
Seat height . . . . . .32.7 in. (830mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . .26.9 in. (682mm)
Footpeg Height . . . . . .14.2 in. (360mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . .7.6 in. (194mm) at expansion chambers
Steering head angle . . . . . 26.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . .3.78 in. (96mm)
Frame . . . . . .tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 1.7 qt. (1.6*l*)
Fuel tank . . . . . .steel, 5.4 gal. (20.3*l*), including 0.6 gal. (2.3*l*) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . .N/A
Average fuel consumption . . . . . .N/A
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . .N/A
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . .N/A
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 53 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 13.343 sec., 98.46 mph (158 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 112 mph (180 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . .N/A
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . .N/A

WARRANTY: 12 months, 12,000 miles

AVAILABLE COLOR: red-and-white only

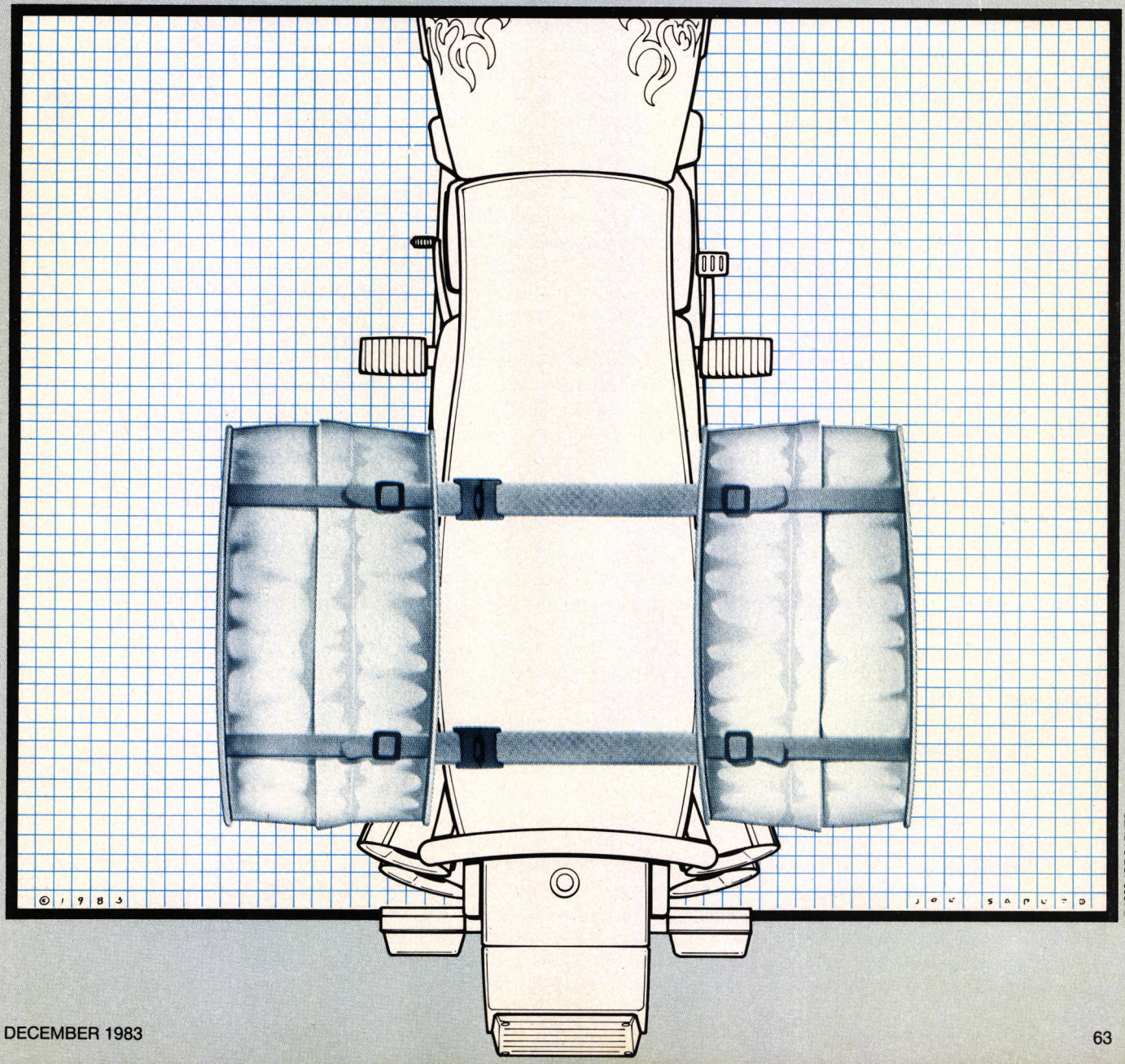


All specifications are the manufacturer's claims, not data compiled by the CYCLE GUIDE staff.

Cycle Guide's

Saddlebag Buyer's Guide

Facts on hard and soft bags . . .
so you're not left holding one.



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• **SADDLEBAGS** are the tools that can turn a motorcycle into transportation for more than just a rider, passenger and what they can carry in their pockets. It's a given that most bikes have a limited cargo capacity, but saddlebags can transform a motorcycle by increasing its range, because they allow riding farther from your closet and toothbrush by letting you take it all with you. Thus, saddlebags can extend both a motorcycle's function and cruising range.

Which does not mean that just any saddlebags will be an all-purpose remedy for a motorcycle's cargo-carrying shortcomings. Before deciding to buy a set of saddlebags, you should first carefully analyze your needs. How often do you need to carry things on your bike? Do those things go along for lengthy trips, or are they frequently taken on and off after short rides? Is your typical cargo two weeks' worth of camping gear carried once a year? A lunchbox every day? A briefcase for occasional meetings? A helmet left with the bike when you're not riding? Is there a chance your gear will get wet? Should the bags provide some measure of theft protection? Is it important that they be easily detached?

All of these applications fall under the general heading of hauling-things-on-your-motorcycle. Fortunately, the motorcycle industry has recognized the wide range of preferences and demands in cargo-hauling and can provide an equally wide range of choices. It's likely that whatever you might want or need is there already; all you've got to do is find it.

Which is where this Buyer's Guide comes in. We've assembled a wishbook of all the saddlebag manufacturers we could find and listed them here for your wondering and wandering pleasure. But before you reach for your checkbook, there are a few important things you need to know.

To begin with, you'll have to decide on a basic bag-configuration. Generally, this means material selection, and the first choice is between hard and soft bags.

Hard bags are traditional favorites. Typically manufactured of some derivative of fiberglass or ABS plastic, hard bags come in several styles. Some are strictly fixed containers that bolt solidly to the bike's frame; such bags usually have lockable lids and are reasonably secure, but they stay bolted to your bike all the time, like it or not. Another type of hard bag is detachable. Often, these quick-detach bags resemble suitcases—not surprisingly, because that's pretty much what they are, but suitcases with mounting systems that allow easy removal from the bracketry. Probably, if you travel often and follow the campground route, you might get better use from solid-mount bags. But if you tour somewhat less frequently and stay in hotels, the detachable suitcase variety likely is a more useful choice.

Soft bags, on the other hand, offer several advantages over both types of hard bags: They're lighter than hard luggage, and typically are much less expensive. Soft bags are commonly made of some type of woven fabric, such as nylon or Cordura, but you will also find them made of everything from space-age textiles to cowboy-age leather. Naturally, soft bags offer less theft-protection than hard luggage because most won't stop so much as a maliciously wielded penknife. But they also tend to be more convenient for riders who don't need bags all the time. Additionally, soft bags' mounts usually are simpler than most hard-bags' bulky bracketry, so the luggage can be quickly removed or reinstalled. All told, the soft bag offers numerous features and attractions that appeal to sport riders, by allowing them to have their motorcycling cake and eat it, too.

With either type of saddlebag, hard or soft, weather protection should be a major concern. Having your only dry clothing get wet is no fun. Most hard bags have some degree of moisture-resistance, which is largely dependent upon the bag's integrity and its lid seal. Soft bags, not surprisingly, are less likely to fend off Mother Nature's worst. Usually, you can avoid problems with weather-proofing on hard saddlebags with a few precautions: Some manufacturers offer waterproof liners that usually double as separate tote bags, and you can always wrap your belongings in crude-but-effective trash bags prior to packing. But, before buying any moto-luggage, look closely at the bags' seals, gaskets, hinges and covers. Check for weather flaps over zippers. Think: Where is water likely to get in?

You'll also want to pay attention to how the bags attach to your bike. First, make certain there are no clearance problems and that none of the bike's functions are hampered; the turnsignals should still be visible and the helmet holder should still be accessible. Passenger footpegs should be unencumbered, the seat should be removable, and you ought to be able to perform simple maintenance on the bike, such as adjusting the shocks, lubing and adjusting the chain, and checking tire pressure. Make certain the bags aren't too close to the exhaust—cooked jeans and exploded cans of shaving cream are not unknown. Aftermarket exhausts can pose problems because they are more upswept than the stock versions. So if you've changed exhaust systems, be sure the bags you choose are compatible with the new exhaust.

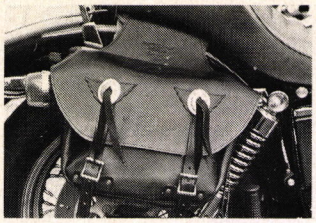
Also, make certain all the necessary mounting bracketry is included before you buy. Sometimes you have to relocate turnsignals. If so, are the required pieces supplied? Usually, most luggage systems are no problem to install, and require little more than a Saturday morning bout in the garage, but the difference between good and bad bracketry can be the difference between a Saturday morning and an entire weekend—or worse. Finally, we have found that luggage offered by your motorcycle's manufacturer usually fits the best, and bags from reputable manufacturers run a close second. Beware, though, of statements such as: "Requires only minor drilling and fitting." That could be minor only if you own a machine shop and welding gear.

With the bags comes the dilemma of how much you actually *can* carry. Most hard-bag manufacturers recommend loading no more than 20 pounds or so per bag. In some cases this limit might sound conservative, but it practically guarantees no failures. You could carry more, probably, and maybe you will. But you'll do it at your own risk, and will find no recommendation of overloading on these pages. Perhaps the manufacturer's estimate is conservative, and perhaps it's not; it's best to mind the warnings.

Try to load the bike evenly, too. Don't, for example, put a camera gear and heavy boots in one side and your sweetheart's lingerie in the other. The bike will be drastically unbalanced, so much so that all but the most insensitive rider would notice it. You need to be sure of the effect a bag and its contents can have on your bike's handling. Also, make certain everything is mounted firmly, and that it's in the right place. Don't overload, and be aware that your bike will act and react differently than when it's unloaded.

The payback is, of course, the way saddlebags can transform your motorcycle. In some cases the bags are a luxury, in others a convenience, and in some a necessity. But in all cases they make it easier for the rider to get farther away from the source of his mortgage payment without suffering the undue hardship of lack of material possessions. Saddlebags allow you to get away from it all, yet still take a little bit of it with you.

Now, you can go shopping.



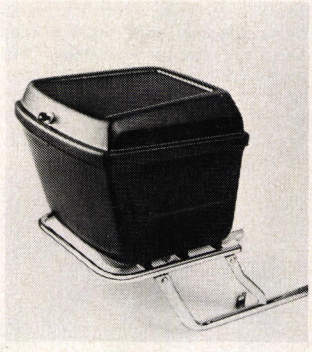
Ace Leather
39 Wells
Palo Alto, California 94301
(415) 323-3317
Price: Deluxe Saddlebags
$159 pr
Wild Bill version
$176 pr
Route 66 Saddlebags
$205 pr

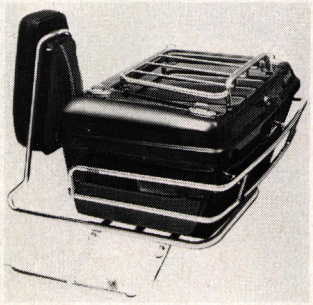
Ace saddlebags are manufactured with American leather and feature nylon stitching throughout. The Ace Deluxe bags measure 13″L, 11″H, 7″W and feature waxed, water-resistant leather, German silver conchos, roller-type buckles, front and rear tie-downs and an adjustable yoke. The Wild Bill version of these bags comes with brass trim around the perimeter of the over-flap, western-style brass buckles, and brass concho trim

plates. Ace's Route 66 models feature a slant-cut design for shock clearance, solid brass hardware, a rigid internal frame, front and rear tie-downs and an adjustable yoke. Dimensions for the Route 66 saddlebags are 12½″L, 13″H, 7″W.

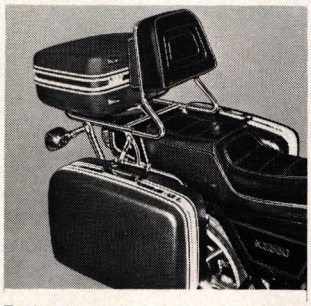
Amco/Samsonite
7425 Fulton Ave.
North Hollywood, California 91605
(213) 875-2470
(800) 423-2353
Price: Saddlebags $260
Standard Travel Trunk $89.95 to $187
Deluxe Travel Trunk $139.95 to $237
Samsonite One Case Set $199.95
Samsonite Two Case Set $372.95
Samsonite Three Case Set $499.95
Samsonite Two Case & Trunk Set $519.95

Amco's product line includes their own vacuum-formed ABS-plastic components, as well as the full line of Samsonite cases and trunks. Each line is designed to fit most popular medium- to large-displacement motorcycles. Amco saddlebags measure 19″L, 12½″H, 10¼″W and feature locking lids, integral turnsignal lights, and a choice of black or white finish. Amco saddlebag options include liner bags ($13.95), top rails ($26.95) and side rails ($59.95).

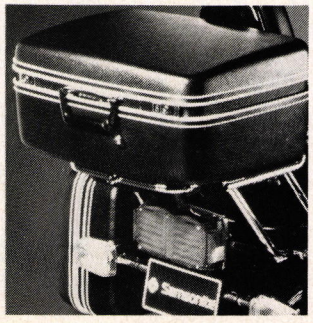




Amco travel trunks are available in Standard (14½″L, 12″H, 15¼″W), and Deluxe (18″L, 13½″H, 19″W) sizes. Each is constructed of ABS plastic with molded-in black or white finish and Amco claims the trunks come complete with mounting hardware for most brands of luggage racks. Options for the Deluxe model include: a black nylon liner bag ($32.95), a top rack ($39.95), side rails ($46.95), and a backrest pad ($18.95).



Each system includes spring-loaded steel cylinder locks to secure the bags to the racks, plus nylon outer weather covers. Standard bags and trunk measure 19¾″L, 12¾″H, 10″W.

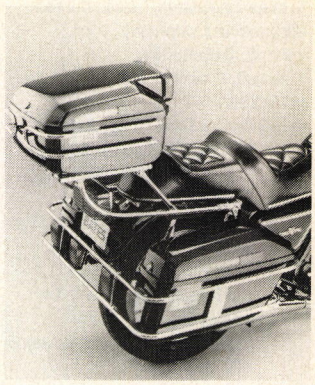


The new larger-capacity Samsonite case measures 19¾″L, 14¾″H, 12″W and retails for $20 more than the standard units. Options for the Samsonite equipment include an adjustable backrest ($52.95). Relocation of turnsignals is necessary on some machines, so Amco supplies a turnsignal kit for $4.95.

The BagMan
P.O. Box 2111, Station A
Champaign, Illinois 61820
(217) 356-1020
Price: Saddlebags "45's" $89.95
Standard Soft Luggage $129.95
Color Coordinated Saddlebags $134
Hybrid Luggage System $229
Rear Seat Bag $56.50

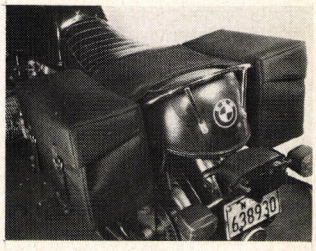
The BagMan offers a selection of soft or soft/hard travel luggage systems to fit most motorcycles. All BagMan luggage is constructed with two layers of Cordura nylon sandwiching a ¼-inch-thick layer of Ethafoam, and features external zipper flaps, seams sealed with anti-wicking thread, oversize YKK zippers, and a color choice of black, blue, red, or brown. Their new "45's" saddlebags measure 15″L, 12″H, 7″W and do not include rain covers. Standard saddlebags (shown) are sold with rain covers included and BagMan claims they can be snapped on or off in seconds.

Bagman's new color-coordinated soft bags were designed with striping and two-tone coloring to compliment the bodywork of the Honda Interceptor or in a special red to match the Kawasaki GPz. Each system comes with black rain covers. The BagMan Hybrid luggage system features black, ABS-plastic external shells which BagMan claims hold the shape of the bags and help keep the bags cleaner. The shells are easily removed, and rain covers are included in the package. The BagMan claims its Rack Seat Bag mounts quickly for added carrying capacity and easily accommodates a full-face helmet. The bag measures 12″L, 10″H, 11″W.



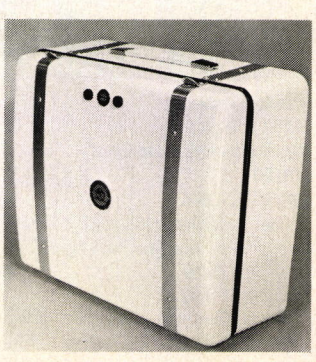
Bates Industries, Inc.
636 W. 16th St.
Long Beach, California 90801
(213) 435-6551
Price: Saddlebags $245 pr
Travel Trunk $135

Bates' 2300-series bags and trunk are manufactured of hand-polished fiberglass. The saddlebags measure 24″L, 13½″H, 10″W and weigh 16 pounds per pair. Options include rear reflectors, integral lights, two types of chromed wrap-around guards, and liner bags. Their large-volume cargo trunk features lid stays which hold the lid open while loading, and an integral, two-inch-thick backrest pad. Options for the trunk include wrap-around guard rails, and a nylon liner bag with a shoulder strap.



Beach's Motorcycle Adventures, Ltd.
2763 West River Parkway
Grand Island, New York 14072
(716) 773-4960
Price: $90 pr

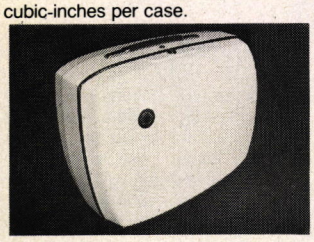
Beach Bags are insulated soft bags designed to provide an economical way to increase your machine's cargo capacity. Each bag measures 14″L, 11″H, 7″W, and Beach claims the set easily adjusts to any seat width. The Beach Bags feature D-ring closures, rain flaps, Cordura nylon construction in conjunction with a closed-cell foam liner and a minimal number of seams for water protection. These bags are available only in black, washable nylon.



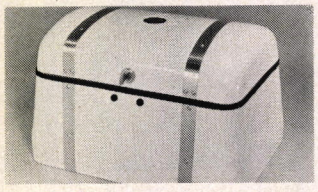
Continued

Craven Equipment/Tom Anderson Motorcycle Equipment
1441 W. Demeter Dr.
Freeport, Illinois 61032
(815) 235-2747
Price: Comet Saddlebags $195 pr
Classic Saddlebags $250 pr
Golden Arrow Saddlebags $260 pr
LeGrande Saddlebags $275 pr
Sportsman Top Case $85
Clubman Top Case $90
Californian Top Case $100
Apollo Top Case $125
Luggage Rack Mount Systems $90 to $125

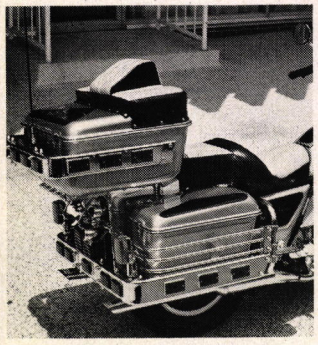
Craven Equipment of London manufactures a variety of panniers and top cases in fiberglass with either a black or white gel-coat finish. Mounting systems are available to fit most motorcycles. The Golden Arrow saddlebags measure 15¾″L, 13⅛″H, 6⅞″W for a total capacity of 1541-cubic-inches per case.



Craven's classic saddlebag measures 19½″L, 13⅞″H, 8½″W for a capacity of 1922-cubic-inches per bag. It features a high-security pin-lock (optional on the Golden Arrow), with 10,000 key combinations.



One of the many Craven top-mount trunk cases available is the Sportsman model pictured here. It measures 16½″L, 15⅛″H, 10″W for a 1708-cubic-inch capacity. A 10-pin lock is optional for $20.



Custom Dressers
2702 S. High Ave.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73129
(405) 672-7564
Price: Saddlebags (Start At) $509.26
Complete Tour Packages $936.56 to $1947.88

Custom Dressers offers saddlebags and trunks constructed of hand-laminated fiberglass. Custom Dresser's bags come in two sizes: 20″L, 14″H, 9″W, and an 11″W version. The manufacturer claims each bag features water-resistant seals, double locks to allow lid removal and complete access to contents and a high-gloss gel-coat finish in black or white. Color-matching or custom painting is optional at extra cost. The $509.26 price includes the saddlebag mounts, rear crash bars and rear luggage rack. Complete touring packages (''rear end set-ups'') such as the one pictured are priced at $1870, and are available to fit most large-displacement Japanese machines. Each of the three sizes of tour boxes can be equipped with back and arm rests, a bag protector/light bumper, triple rails and custom paint.

Denfield
Michael Bondy Associates
P. O. Box 123
Haworth, New Jersey 07641
(201) 385-2552
Price: $386.50 to $391.50

Denfield bags have been available in Europe for many years but have been imported to the U.S. for only the past few years. The Denfield suitcase-style lock-on luggage detaches from the chromed mounting rack with the turn of a key. The bags use a tongue-in-groove aluminum design, sealed with a foam rubber O-ring for water protection. Denfield motorcycle luggage is available for BMWs, Hondas and some Yamahas and Kawasakis.

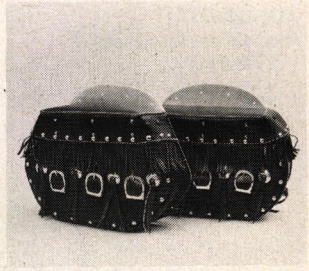
Drag Specialties, Inc.
P. O. Box 9336
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440
(612) 935-1000
Price: Nylon Saddlebags $27.50
Canvas Saddlebags $39.95
Tour America Soft Luggage $87.95
Leather Saddlebags $172
Detachable Leather Saddlebags $159.95 to $219.95
57 Rigid Saddlebags $350

Drag Specialties offers a number of soft saddlebags from simple and economical canvas or nylon models to more elaborately detailed leather designs. The nylon bags are available in black only, and feature two 7″ by 8″ zippered side pouches, a 14½″ by 20″ zippered top storage area, and two main compartments which measure 13″L, 12″H, 4″W. Adjustable mounting straps are designed for easy installation. Pictured with the nylon bags are the Drag Specialties canvas bags, which the manufacturer claims are mildew-proofed and water- and flame-resistant. They feature a nylon drawstring top liner, heavy-duty nylon stitching and leather trim and straps. Available in black only, the canvas bags measure 13″L, 13″H, 5″W.

The Tour America Soft Luggage system is designed for easy installation and removal. Drag Specialties claims its waterproof cover system helps keep gear dry and clean regardless of weather and road conditions. These bags come in black only and include all mounting hardware for installation on most bikes.

Drag Specialties' leather saddlebags feature hand-stained, saddle-stitched Latigo leather construction with heavy-duty brass rivets at stress points and dual rear tie-down straps for mounting. They are available in plain black or with ''Live To Ride'' branded into the leather. Each side compartment measures 14″L, 12½″H, 7″W.

The latest addition to the Drag Specialties line is a set of detachable black leather bags exclusively styled for 1972–83 Harley Superglides. They feature heavy-duty riveted straps, saddle-stitched seams, nickel-plated buckles and elastic inserts to retain the bags' shape. This model is available in plain or braided leather trim and in ''Throw-Over'' or ''Bolt-On'' styles. Bolt-On bags feature a quick-release chrome mounting system. Side compartments measure 16″L, 12½″H, 5½″W.



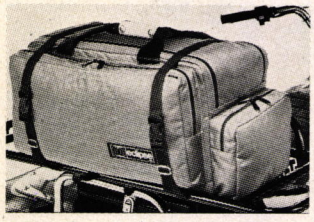
Old-style Harley riding bags for rigid frames are available in the form of Drag Specialties' 57 Rigid model. Made from genuine black cowhide, they feature a neoprene backing with a PVC insert to hold the bags' shape, chrome buckles and studs, tie-down straps to fit the stock fender and chrome mounting brackets.

Eclipse, Inc.
P. O. Box 7370
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
(313) 761-1170
Price: Saddlepacks I $135
Saddlepacks II $199
Tail Pack $55
Explorer Rear Bag $60

Eclipse Saddlepacks and bags are made of 11-ounce, 1000-denier Cordura nylon. Eclipse claims the nylon is coated with urethane to combat water penetration and mildew, and that each bag is stitched with 36/16 cotton-wrapped polyester thread utilizing double-sewn edge-bound seams to assure structural integrity. Stress points on the bags are bartacked and YKK nylon coil zippers are used throughout. An adjustable attachment harness and an internal support frame are used in each Saddlepack design. Saddlepack I units measure 17″L, 11½″H, 8½″W with a 3400 cubic-inch capacity. They can be snapped together and carried as a single piece of luggage with a leather handle.

Saddlepacks II are similar in design, but with fewer compartments and a D-ring mounting arrangement. Slightly larger dimensions account for a combined capacity of 5100 cubic inches. Eclipse offers two options for both Saddlepacks designs: rain covers ($25), and shoulder straps ($9).

The Eclipse Tail Pack measures 13″L, 9½″H, 9″W with a capacity of 1111 cubic inches and is designed to mount to any motorcycle seat or rack. In addition to the main compartment, there is a small front pocket in the Tail Pack, suitable for storing the optional rain cover ($10) and other small items. A special harness system provides adjustment for different rack and seat widths.



Eclipse Explorer rear bags feature five separate compartments and a top opening. Eclipse claims the Explorer can be neatly folded into its own end pocket for convenient one-way cargo packing. Explorer dimensions are 30½″L, 11½″H, 11″W with a capacity of 3858 cubic inches.

Fabri-Moto Morini-Herdan Corp.
Rt. 61, P. O. Box 65
Port Clinton, Pennsylvania
19549
(215) 562-3155
Price: $129.95

Fabri saddlebags are Italian imports constructed of black ABS plastic with a chrome-plated steel-tube bracket and bag-guard mounting system. These bags come equipped with detachable lids, double locks, lined interiors and brackets to relocate the turnsignals. Herdan claims a universal-type mounting system enables the saddlebags to be used on most popular motorcycles. Dimensions for the bags are 15″L, 12″H, 6½″W.

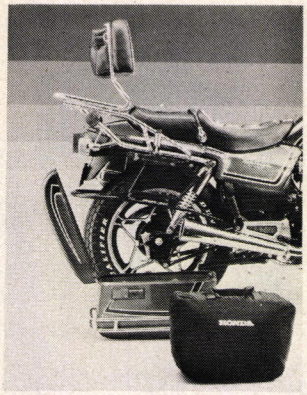
Arthur Fulmer Co.
P. O. Box 177
Memphis, Tennessee 38101
(901) 525-5711
Price: Saddlebags $129.95
Trunk $79.95

Arthur Fulmer's Falcon soft luggage is made with a Cordura-nylon exterior with foam insulation. Fulmer claims the heavy-duty vinyl interior provides maximum protection against dirt and water. The quick-mount saddlebags attach over the seat area and are designed to hold up to 20 pounds each. Fulmer claims two full-face helmets can be stored in the trunk. A vinyl strap serves as a built-in carrying handle and protects the zipper.

Harley-Davidson Motor Co.
P. O. Box 653
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201
(414) 342-4680
Price: Over-The-Seat Leather Saddlebags $119.95
Soft Throwover Saddlebags $139.95
Customform Saddlebags $269.95

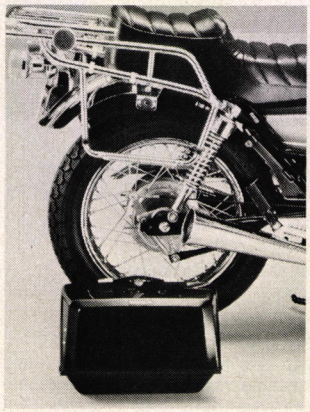
Harley's Over-The-Seat bags are constructed from heavy Latigo leather (black) or 8–9 ounce strap leather (brown) embossed with the Harley-Davidson bar & shield logo. Each bag has riveted stress points and measures 11″L, 11″H, 5″W. The H-D Soft Throwover bags are made of heavy denier water-resistant nylon, trimmed in leather with the bar & shield logo sewn on the flaps. Each bag features dual accessory pockets, side storm flaps and a removable pouch. Throwover bags are designed to fit XL, FX and FXR models and measure 15″L, 12″H, 6″W.

Customform, over-the-seat, Harley saddlebags are manufactured from 8–9 ounce Latigo leather built around a 9-gauge galvanized-steel frame for bag support and shape retention. The Customform bags feature dual exterior pockets, embossed H-D logo, an inside storm flap with Velcro closure and large buckles. These bags measure 15″L, 12″H, 6″W, are designed to fit XL, FX and FXR models and are available in black finish only.

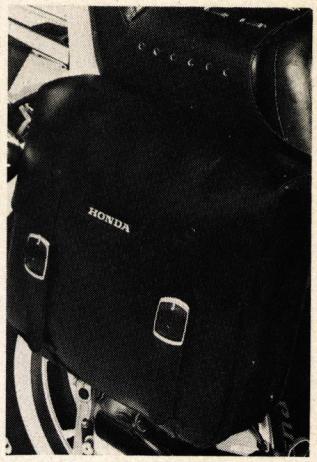


Hondaline
American Honda Motor Co, Inc.
P. O. Box 50
Gardena, California 90247
Price: Commuter Saddlebags $270
Mini-bags $154
Custom Leather Bags $127.50
Nylon Saddlebags $99.95
Sport Saddlebags $526
Pebblegrain Detachable Luggage Combination $434
Silver Wing Small Trunk $69.50
Silver Wing Large Trunk $99.50
Color-Matched Detachable Luggage $491
Interstate-Style Detachable Trunk $150

Hondaline's color-matched Commuter saddlebags are designed primarily for use on lightweight motorcycles. The bags are designed as a complete and integrated luggage system when fitted with the optional detachability kit, guardrails and saddlebag liners. Standard features include a keyed locking system, rear-hinged top and side-mounted reflectors.

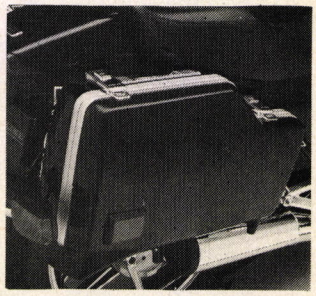


The Mini-Bags from Honda were developed specifically for use on the CM250 Custom. Each bag features a quick-detachable mounting system, a keyed locking system and side-opening lids for accessibility.



Hondaline's leather saddlebags are designed specifically for Honda's latest Custom models. These vat-dyed, grade "A" cowhide bags feature an adjustable seat-strap for universal mounting, double buckle/strap closures and leather ties at turnsignal stalks and passenger footpegs. The Hondaline leather saddlebags are available for the V45/65 Magna, Shadow 500/750, Nighthawk 550/650, CX650 Custom and VT500 Ascot.

Nylon Saddlebags from Hondaline feature adjustable Velcro-equipped seat straps, a dual-zipper front closure, a nylon-web handle with D-rings for additional tie-down convenience, rigid-foam inserts, removable, clear-vinyl rain covers and a color choice of black or Wineberry. The nylon bags are available to fit the same custom bikes as Hondaline's leather saddlebags.



Color-matched and detachable Hondaline Sport saddlebags are designed to integrate with the lines of the Honda Sabre and Interceptor. Standard Sportbag features include injection-molded ABS construction, cast-aluminum folding handles, internal hold-down straps, single key and latch operation and chrome-plated mounting hardware.

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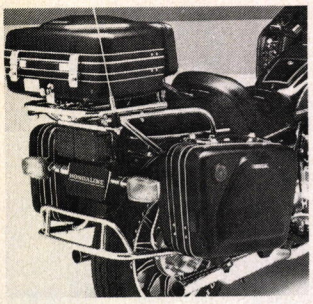
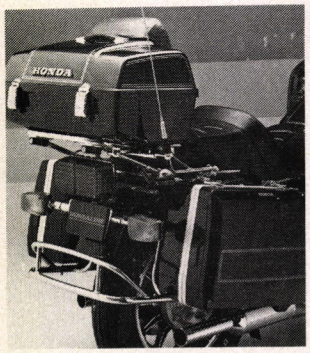
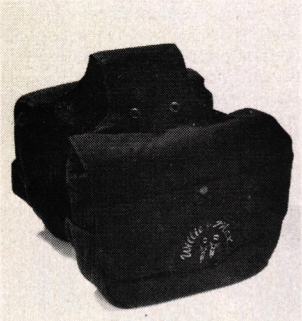
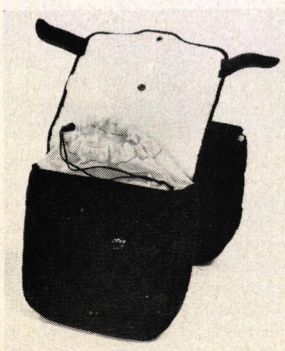


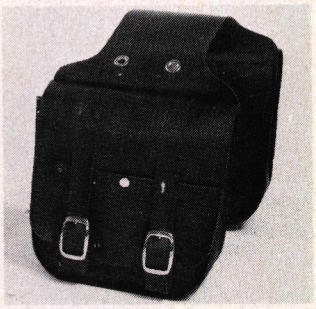
Hondaline's detachable Pebblegrain luggage is constructed of black ABS plastic, designed for a traditional look. System features include quick-detachable systems, a 35-liter capacity for each case, retractable carrying handles, aluminum tongue-and-groove frames with rubber O-ring seal and optional nylon weather covers.



A line of Color-Matched Detachable luggage is available for heavy-duty Honda touring needs. This set includes large-capacity, detachabale saddlebags and a large Interstate-style touring trunk. Both bags and trunk feature dual-keyed locking systems, internal hold-down straps and chrome-plated mounting hardware. The travel-trunk mount allows the case to move forward, providing a backrest for the solo rider.

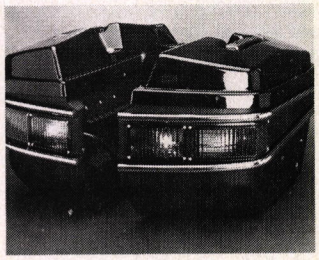






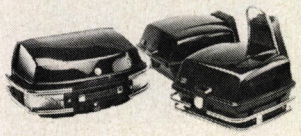
IB CO International
5446 Oceanus Drive
Huntington Beach, California 92649
(714) 895-1243
Price: Synthetic Leather Saddlebags $51 to $89.50
Cordura Nylon Saddlebags $65.50 to $99
Dry Liners for Synthetic Saddlebags $9 to $12 per bag

IB CO International is the exclusive distributor of the Willie & Max line of soft luggage, which is an assortment of soft luggage in either Cordura nylon or synthetic leather. The saddlebags are available in two sizes—small; 10″H, 11″L, 3½″W, and large; 14″H, 11″L, 5½″W. The Synthetic Leather saddlebags are available with optional liners to improve weather resistance. All Willie & Max saddlebags are a throw-over design with optional elastic tie-downs ($5), and the nylon bags feature Velcro-type closures and integral plastic liners with a drawstring closure.



KG Engineering, Inc.
115 Front St.
Woonsocket, Rhode Island 02895
(401) 765-0130
Price: On Request

KG saddlebags and trunks feature flush-mounted handles, integral running and directional lights, six-way fore and aft adjustment of the bags, black epoxy-coated mounting frames, chromed edge guards, high-gloss laminated ABS/acrylic tops, pebble-grain cross-link polyethylene bodies and a rubber isolated, Omni II rack/mount and backrest design. All bags feature lockable quick-detach mounting. KG saddlebags measure 25″L, 12″H, with a 3300 cubic-inch capacity for the pair.



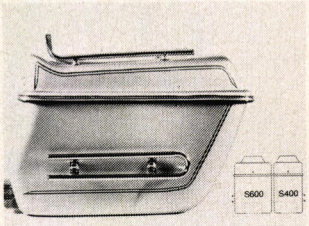
The largest trunk (Omni) offers 3000 cubic inches of cargo space with dimensions of 15″L, 11″H, 21″W. A carrier that mounts on the hinged trunk lid and a turnsignal-relocation package are optional. Information on the two smaller travel trunks is available on request.

Kerker
7900 Deering Ave.
Canoga Park, California 91304
(213) 999-3060
Price: $119.50

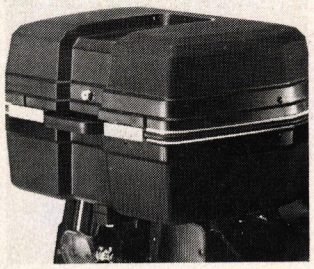
Kerker Sidekicks are a buckle-closing, flip-top, soft luggage system with a lightweight interior framework. Kerker claims these lightweight, machine washable bags each feature a 1080 cubic-inch capacity, convenient carrying handles, quick-release front and rear hold-down straps, a reflective safety stripe, full lining with protective padding, and a fully adjustable strap mounting-system with Velcro connections designed to adapt to most motorcycles. Rain covers are included as standard equipment.

Kolorkraft
13033 Telegraph Rd.
Santa Fe Springs, California 90670
(213) 994-8255
Price: SofPac Saddlebags $89.95 pr
Diablo Saddlebags $199.95 to $229.95 pr

Kolorkraft's SofPac luggage is constructed of heavy Cordura nylon treated with Supercoat K weather-proofing. Standard SofPac features include covered three-sided zippers with locks, carrying handles, rain covers in separate pockets, removable side stiffeners, and reinforcement in critical stress areas. Each case measures 15″L, 12″H, 10″W. Available colors for the SofPac bags are black, brown, silver, tan or blue. Matching tank bag and tank panniers are also available.



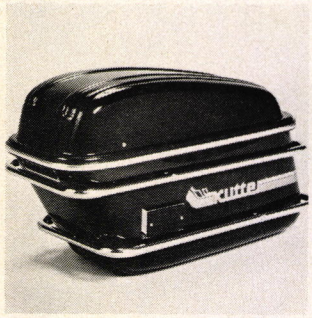
Diablo saddlebags by Kolorkraft are fiberglass with finished interiors and DuPont Imron epoxy, high-gloss paint. These bags are available in two versions: the Deluxe (shown) with chromed rack and rails, and a Standard version without the rack and rails. All Diablo bags feature a universal mounting system, chromed hinges, weathersealing, Posi-Locks, stop lights, double contrasting pinstripes, and an integral spoiler-style top design. Diablo bags are available in black, white, and silver finish. Information on the larger S600 model, and matching trunk, is available on request.



Krauser
6909 S.W. 216th St.
Lynnwood, Washington 98036
(206) 771-8865
Price: Star Saddlebags $435 pr
Star Travel Trunk $175
Soft Top Travel Trunk $189

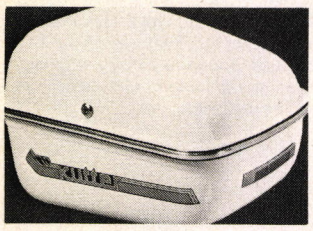
Krauser's Star luggage is made of injection-molded ABS-plastic and mounts with high-density aluminum castings. A 66-pound carrying capacity is claimed for the saddlebags, each with a 2400 cubic-inch capacity. Star saddlebags are designed with a deep-set tongue-and-groove rim with an O-ring gasket for weather-sealing. Both bags and trunk are equipped with key locks and carrying handles.

Krauser's Soft Top is constructed of woven nylon with an ABS-plastic base. A centrally located expansion zipper allows the capacity of the five-pound bag to be increased from 1800 cubic inches to a full 2400 cubic inches.

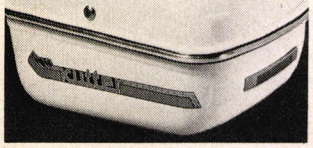


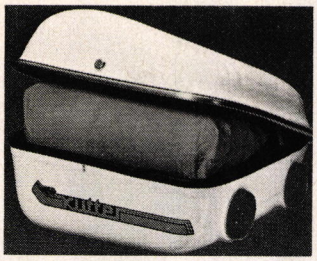
Kutter
Howe Engineered Sales Co.
P. O. Box 642
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
(319) 236-9606
Price: Saddlebags $333.80
Mini Packer Trunk $68.40
Packer Trunk $116.40
Maxi Packer Trunk $161.50

Kutter saddlebags and trunks are molded of black or white ABS plastic and include mounts and hardware. The saddlebags measure 25¼″L, 14½″H, 12½″W and feature hinged covers, running lights, side reflectors, turnsignals and taillights. Chromed, tubular side-guard rails are optional ($68.50).



All three of the travel trunks by Kutter come equipped with hinged, locking, side-opening, sealed tops. The Mini Packer measures roughly 14″L, 12″H, 11″W, with a capacity of 1200 cubic inches and is designed for use on small bikes. The Mini Packer is available in white only. The standard Packer measures 18″L, 12″H, 14½″W and features approximately 2800 square inches capacity (space for two helmets), the Kutter side logo and a rear reflector. A cargo kit and backrest are optional on the Packer.

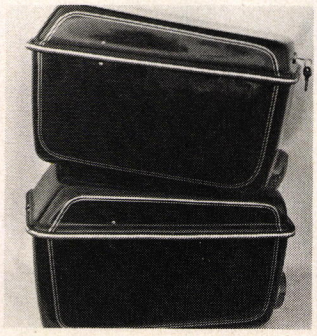




Kutter's Maxi Packer will hold up to 3800 cubic inches of gear, measures 18″L, 13″H, 18½″W and features chromed trim and twin tail/brake lights. A backrest is optional on the Maxi Packer.

The Leatherworks
350 Coogan Way
El Cajon, California 92020
(714) 442-9651
Price: Leather Saddlebags $169.95
Pro-Cycle Saddlebags $199.50 (medium)
$239.50 (large)

The Leatherworks offers three different bags in two leather-based designs. Their all-leather bags are embossed with decorative linework surrounding large metal emblems on the flaps. These emblems are available in a variety of themes, and can be chrome- or gold-plated. An adjustable mounting arrangement allows the bags to be raised or lowered to fit a wide variety of machines. Pro-Cycle bags are also leather, but feature a polished-aluminum panel on each side panel. Large Pro-Cycle bags measure 14″L, 12½″H, 7″W; the medium version has dimensions of 12″L, 10″H, 4″W.



Lee's Rider & Cycle Accessories
125 E. Inez St.
Tucson, Arizona 85706
(602) 294-5875
(800) 528-4843
Price: Saddlebags $199.95 pr

Lee's fiberglass saddlebags are designed to mount close to the vehicle's centerline while accomodating upswept exhaust systems. Each set of bags comes with universal-type mounts and hardware and measures 20″L, 12″H, 9″W. Optional, heavy-duty nylon saddlebag liners sell for $19.95 per pair. Rear lighting units are standard equipment.

Malcolm Smith Products
7563 Indiana St.
Riverside, California 92507
(714) 687-1300
Price: Saddlebags $149.95 pr
Trunkbag $74.95
Overnighter Trunkbag Additions $89.95 pr

Malcolm Smith's soft luggage is made from ballistic nylon, the same material used for bulletproof vests. The saddlebags measure 15″L, 12″H, 7″W and are equipped with Fastex buckles, two-way zippers, an expandable zippered inner pocket and an outside compartment in the lid. Rain covers made of Early Warning material are optional.

Malcolm's Trunkbag is designed to fit virtually any luggage rack and will also attach behind a backrest. It features a two-way zipper, Fastex buckles and an optional Early Warning waterproofed rain cover. Dimensions for the Trunkbag are 12″L, 7″H, 15″W. Overnighter side bags attach to the Trunkbag to provide a greater cargo capacity. Each bag measures 12″L, 9″H, 5″W and features the same type of construction as the Trunkbag and includes the optional, Early Warning rain covers.

Malott's Custom Accessories, Inc.
P. O. Box 511
1790 E. Yosemite
Manteca, California 95336
(209) 239-9588
Price: Saddlebags $190 to $220 pr
Travel Trunk $175 to $235
Complete Touring Kit $600

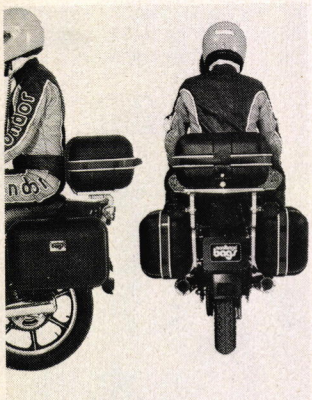
Malott's markets two types of saddlebags, two trunk designs, and a touring/mounting kit to help these components blend in with the lines of the motorcycle. All Malott's bags are fiberglass, and are available in either 8- or 10-inch widths. Dual-filament taillights, keyed latches, and protective molding around the bags are all standard. Malott's travel trunks are also fiberglass, and include chromed double siderails and chromed locking lid latches. One model has a humped lid that incorporates a two-piece passenger backrest. Color-matching for the trunks is $100, and $125 extra for the saddlebags. A light bar ($235), trailer hitch ($100) and custom trim ($125) are optional.

Marsee
105 W. Tully St.
Convoy, Ohio 45832
(419) 749-4059
Price: Commuter Saddlebags $89.95
Standard Saddlebags $125.95
Rack/Seat Bag $52.95

Commuter bags by Marsee are made of 1000 denier close-weave Cordura fabric with a water-repellent coating and a semi-rigid foam insert. Additional features include quick-release Fastex buckles, a universal-type mounting arrangement, two-way nylon zippers with leather pull-tabs, nylon-webbed carrying straps. The lids open 270-degrees, and include storm flap. Interior dimensions are 13″L, 11″H, 8″W with a capacity of 1144 cubic inches per side.

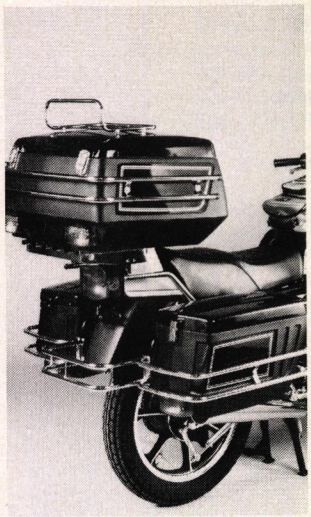
Continued

Marsee's Standard saddlebags are manufactured from the same treated Cordura nylon as their Commuter bags. Similar features such as Fastex buckles, two-way zippers, semi-rigid foam inserts, and a 270-degree opening lid also are also found on this model. In addition, the standard saddlebags come with collapsing side pockets for additional storage space, molded carrying handles with leather-strap mounting, pockets for storing the mounting straps and a mounting-strap arrangement designed to keep the bags from shifting. Rain covers are optional. Dimensions for the standard bags are 12¾″L, 11″H, 7¾″W, plus a 11¾″L, 8½″H, 2″W side pocket on each bag. Total storage capacity for the saddlebags is 4371 cubic inches. A rear Rack/Seat Bag is also available from Marsee. It measures 14¾″L, 8½″H, 8″W with an interior volume of 1256 cubic inches. Other basic features of the rack bag are similar to those found on Marsee's saddlebags.



Nonfango Bags
Michael Bondy Associates
P. O. Box 123
Haworth, New Jersey 07641
(201) 385-2552
Price: $154 to $385

Nonfango bags are manufactured in Italy, and are available for the first time in the U.S. Each case is constructed of impact-resistant, thermoplastic material, with a tongue-in-groove weather sealing rim. The 33-liter bag can carry a full-face helmet. Handles on the saddlebags double as passenger grips, and the top-mounted bag has four-position adjustment. The die-cast light-alloy mounting racks are designed to keep weight low, without interfering with existing components. Mounts to fit most touring bikes list from $49 from the top bag only, to $70 for the three bag kit. The saddlebags sell for $105 each.



Ocelot Products
895 W. Mill St.
San Bernardino, California
92410
(714) 884-0484
Price: Saddlebags $155.95 (7″) pr
$175.95 (10″) pr
Travelercaddy Trunk $159.95

Ocelot's saddlebags are available in both Standard and Cutaway versions. The Cutaway model is designed specifically to accommodate mounting on machines with upswept exhaust systems. Both styles feature a perimeter seal, a keyed-lock assembly, turnsignals and taillights and are available in black or white finish. Chromed dress-rails are available as an option. The Ocelot Travelercaddy trunk measures 21″L, 14″H, 25″W and is constructed of rotationally molded polyethylene plastic. It comes with dual-keyed locks, stop and taillights. Options include a backrest pad ($19.95), side/rear rails ($49.95), and a top-mounted, chrome-plated parcel rack ($21.95).

Pacifico, Inc.
1625 S. E. Hogan Rd.
Gresham, Oregon 97030
(503) 666-5502
Price: Sport Trunk $129.95

Pacifico's Sport Trunk is constructed of high-impact injection-molded ABS-plastic coated with polyurethane paint in black, white or silver. The Sport Trunk's dimensions of 18″L, 11″H, 17″W produce a capacity of 2610 cubic inches, enough room for two open-face helmets. The Sport Trunk's features include internally mounted scissor hinges, front-to-rear opening, a keyed locking mechanism and a built-in concave backrest. Pacifico claims the universal mounting hardware allows adaptation to most luggage racks with no modification. Mounted weight of the trunk is less than eight pounds.

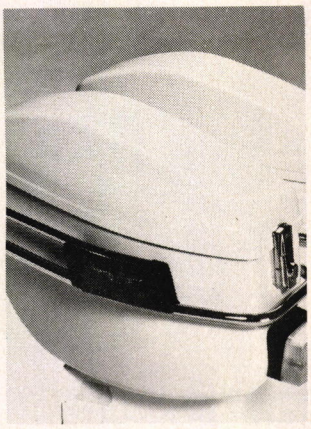
Rev-Pack
P. O. Box 175
New Cuyama, California 93254
(805) 766-2454
Price: Saddle Packs $100 to $130 pr
Stuff Packs $77 to $92 pr

Rev-Packs are made of vinyl-laminated Cordura nylon with nylon-web straps and Delrin plastic buckles. The Saddle Packs feature two internal pockets, heavy-duty, abrasion-resistant rear panels a metal gate frame in the top, that snaps open or closed as desired, and rain flaps on each end. Each pack measures 12″L, 14″H, 7″W for a capacity of approximately 1100 cubic inches. The Saddle Packs collapse and roll together to form a 13″L, 4″W bundle when not in use.

Rev-Pack's Stuff Packs have the same type of construction as the Saddle Packs, with filled dimensions of 18″L, 9″ in diameter. The Stuff Packs are designed to carry sleeping bags and other soft gear. Both Saddle Packs and Stuff Packs can be ordered in black, or silver at extra cost.

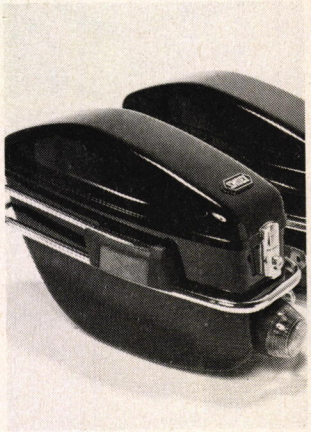
Second Story Leather Shop
30 N. Maple St.
FLorence, Massachusetts
01060
(413) 586-6334
Price: Saddlebags $129 to $179

Second Story's Old-West-styled saddlebags are made of oiled cowhide with an inside plastic liner for additional waterproofing. Each bag is bonded to a hard rubber back, which Second Story claims protects the leather from contact-wear against the motorcycle. A hidden, sewn-in metal strip helps maintain the bag's shape. Second Story's small saddlebag measures 10″L, 11″H, 6½″W, and the larger version measures 15″L, 11½″H, 6½″W. Both sizes have five tie-straps for attachment.



Shoei
1717 Pontius Ave.
Los Angeles, California 90025
(213) 477-6051
Price: Saddlebags; SB-2A $229, SB-3A $249
SB-4 $229, SB-18 $249
Trunks; SB-21 $159.95, SB-22 $159.95

Shoei manufactures a complete line of saddlebags and trunks. Most Shoei saddlebags are designed for 250cc and larger machines, and are available in four or five colors. The model SB-2A bags measure 17½″L, 13″H, 8½″W and weigh less than 20 pounds per set. Features on the SB-2A bags include running light/turnsignals, guard/bumper rails, reflectors and keyed locks.



Shoei's SB-3A model saddlebags measure 18⅞″L, 13⅕″H, 10⅘″W and weigh less than 16 pounds per set.

Continued on page 83

SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Six For One

Half a dozen for the other.

• Yamaha and Kenny Roberts were blindsided this year in the 500cc world championship Grands Prix. While King Kenny was looking over one shoulder, awaiting the expected squadron of Suzukis, Freddie Spencer and his Honda NS500F slipped by on the other side. Before Roberts knew it, Spencer and his three-cylinder Honda—with an engine design that most GP insiders figured was a development model for a faster, four-cylinder two-stroke—had racked up three wins in the first three races of the season.

Roberts and Yamaha were stunned. They figured that Suzuki, having won the world title for the past two seasons, again would be the team to beat in 1983. No one, not even Roberts, thought the Honda triple would grab an early season, 20-point lead. Instead, Suzuki's square-four took a backseat to Honda's vee-three powerplant and Yamaha's vee-four. The series showdown narrowed to Honda/Spencer, Yamaha/Roberts.

Yamaha wanted the championship badly, and changed its race strategy for the Italian GP at Monza. Rather than utilize the Yamaha'a top-speed advantage, the plan called for reducing the bike's weight for better handling. So the fuel load for the race

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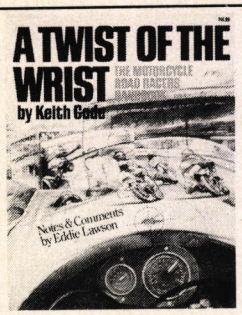

"A TWIST OF THE WRIST"— The Motorcycle Road Racers Handbook. Crammed full of the successful techniques Keith Code uses to train riders like Wayne Rainey and Steve Wise. Even Eddie Lawson agrees: "The things Keith goes over in his book are things I do all the time." **Acrobat Books,** P.O. Box 480820, Dept. CG, Los Angeles, CA 90048. (213) 484-9323. Cal. residents $16.95 (tax included). Other states, $15.95 (includes shipping and handling). Visa & M/C - Include signature, card # and expiration date.

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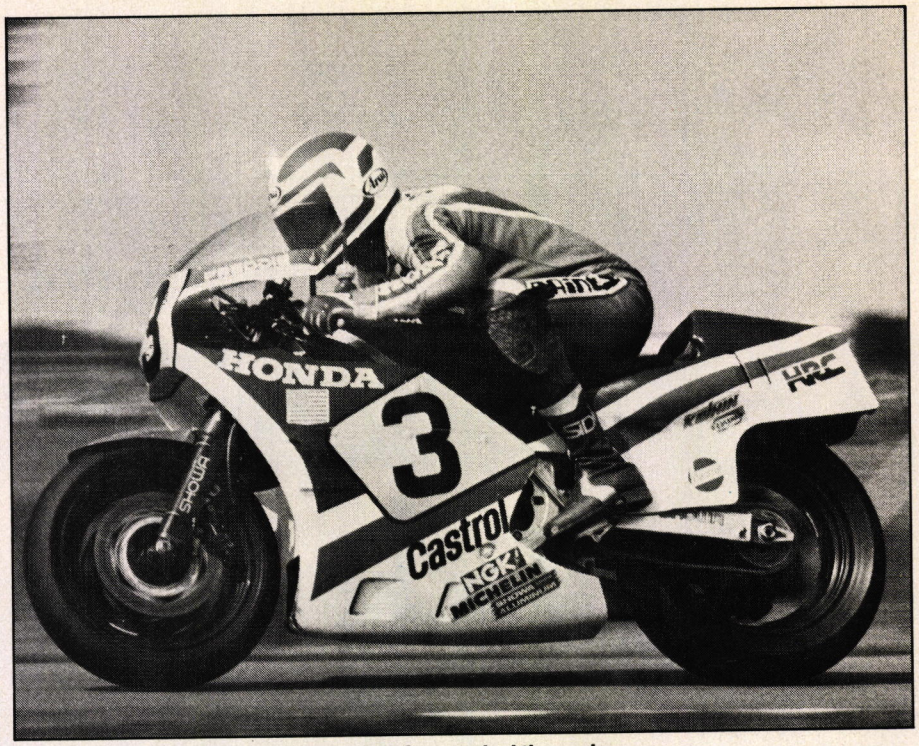


After three races, Honda-mounted Freddie Spencer had three wins

Initial bets were that Suzuki or Yamaha would be out front.

was calculated to the final teaspoonful. But the calculation didn't take into account the possibility of crashing. Roberts fell on the 20th lap, and then, on the last lap, he prematurely coasted to a stop, his engine out of gas. Spencer went on to win.

Yamaha made another decisive mistake later in the season at the Yugoslavian GP, where tire troubles relegated Roberts to fifth place, one position behind his new teammate, Eddie Lawson. Race manager Giacomo Agostini failed to implement team strategy and allowed Lawson to finish in fourth place. Had Roberts been flagged ahead, he would have gained two additional points; two points that eventually would have affected the world championship.

Through hard work, though, the tide shifted in Yamaha's and Roberts' favor: He won on the fast tracks, including Assen, Spa and Silverstone. Heading into the final two races—the Swedish and San Marino GPs—Roberts trailed Spencer by only two points. Each had five wins.

Before the season climax, Roberts said the Honda suited the Swedish course, while his Yamaha was tailored for the San Marino race, which would be run at Imola, a high-speed course where KR had won a non-points race earlier in the year. But to Roberts' suprise, he led most of the Swedish race. However, he didn't lead it when it counted—at the finish line on the final lap—due in part to a maneuver by Spencer that, in Roberts' words, "is not my idea of racing."

Roberts said afterwards that he had been braking prematurely for the last corner, a right-hander, all race long, saving a late-braking maneuver as an ace in the hole. On the final lap, with a two-second lead, he went to play that ace. "On the last lap," Roberts said, "I popped my head up, as if I were braking at my usual place, then got back down under the bubble and went into the turn deeper than normal." While the move should have put additional space between him and Spencer, the ploy backfired, suckering Spencer deeper into the turn. Roberts found himself in trouble. "I saw this big red thing next to me at the apex," he said. The big red thing was an out-of-control Honda NS500F with Fast Freddie Spencer perched in the saddle, using all his resources to regain his, and his bike's, composure.

The two bikes bumped and nudged. Roberts reacted predictably, making room for Spencer while both riders veered off the track, to prevent a two-bike crash.

Spencer recovered first, and left Roberts in second place. Consequently, Spencer left Sweden with a five-point lead, rather than trailing by one point.

Roberts was, to say the least, upset. He even said that if Yamaha had asked him to sign a contract for 1984 (he now intends to retire, or at least semi-retire) he would have signed on the dotted line, then and there. Later, when he cooled down, he only said, "Things get hairy out there sometimes. I didn't like Freddie's move, but that's the way it goes."

The drama for San Marino was set: Roberts had to win, or at least finish the race with six more points than Spencer. Spencer, on the other hand, had only to finish second to win the title, no matter what.

Roberts, then, figured out his game plan: first, winning the race; second, hoping that

The main attractions all year were Yamaha's Kenny Roberts (4) and Honda's Freddie Spencer (3)

When the smoke cleared each had six wins, but Spencer had what really mattered—the World Championship.

First, Last, and Always

• Ken Clark, Yamaha's race director in America, wasn't making any excuses for Kenny Roberts losing the 500cc roadracing world championship. In fact, his position on Roberts is quite clear: "Nobody is faster on a roadracer than Kenny."

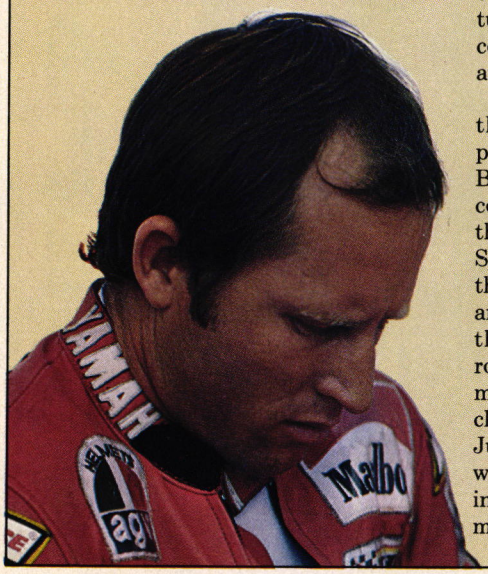
Still, the question of why Roberts didn't win bothered Clark; the blame had to rest somewhere. And Clark is a man who seeks the truth about winning—or losing. He was willing to point the finger: "He'd be World Champion if we (Yamaha) hadn't screwed up." Clark's accusation included references to the Italian GP, where Roberts ran out of gas, and the Yugoslavian GP, where teammate Eddie Lawson wasn't given orders to let Roberts by.

But Roberts makes no excuses as to why he didn't win the title. Referring to Italy, he doesn't think anyone is to blame: "We ran out of gas—there's nothing to say about it. Someone just calculated *too* close, that's all." In Roberts' typically classy style, the translation is: *That's racing.*

But on the subject of the Swedish GP, Roberts was more outspoken. He had a two-second lead going into the final turn, but an error by Freddie Spencer cost him the win. "It was a win, as far as I am concerned," Roberts said.

In any event, Spencer went on to win the championship, and King Kenny probably will retire without the crown. But as far as some race-watchers are concerned, America—and the world, for that matter—has two roadrace kings: Spencer and Roberts. Because even though Spencer won the points battle and the championship, no one can deny that Roberts is, indeed, fast on a roadracer. Furthermore, he has given us more than a decade of his life that includes a racing career without equal. Just his *presence* on a racetrack made *us* winners. And for that, above all his racing accomplishments, he'll always be remembered.

—Dain Gingerelli



Suzuki and Randy Mamola stood alone

Lost in a sea of Honda horsepower.

someone other than Spencer was the runner-up. As he said later, "I never had to think about so many people finishing in second position."

After a cat-and-mouse race, in which Roberts led but allowed Spencer to keep him in sight in the hope that teammate Lawson could catch him and pass for second, the Yamaha and Honda riders finished one-two. The final tally, after 12 races, was six wins apiece. But the ultimate difference was that Spencer had more points—144 to 142—and the world championship.

—Dain Gingerelli

Continued

PRICE WAR:

Auctioning For Dollars

The bidding starts at the finish line.

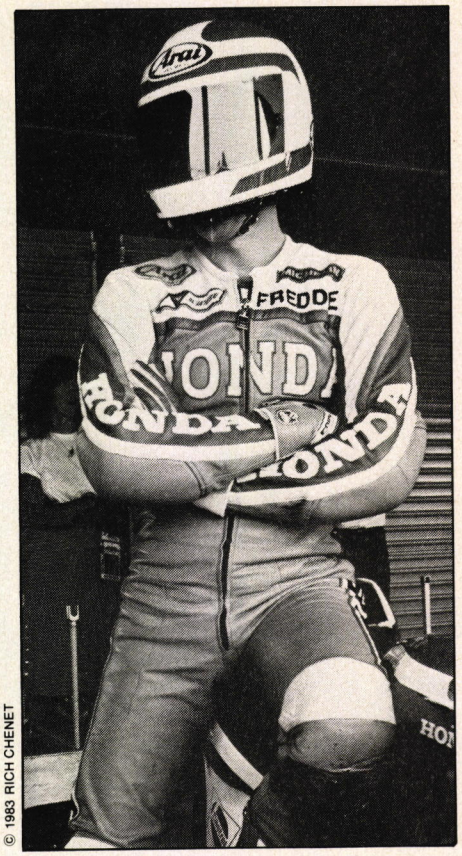
• Ever wonder what it would be like to be in Kenny Roberts' boots? Better yet, to wear his leathers, or Bob Hannah's motocross jersey? You can find out: Just be the top bidder at a Motorcycle Dealernews Show auction.

The auctions' purpose is to raise money for the Dealernews Pro Rider Benefit Fund, a non-profit, charitable organization formed by MCD to help injured racers pay their medical bills. The fund was formed, said MCD publisher Dick Hamer, following the 1982 AMA Awards Banquet. "Everybody was paying attention to the award recipients," Hamer said, "but also there was Bruce Hammer, who was in a wheelchair as a result of his Elkhart Lake accident." Hamer knew the financial pressures Hammer was under, too. "The AMA's $10,000 insurance limit is dated," Hamer said. "From what I understand, the chances of a rider getting full coverage from a serious accident are slim."

So the Pro Rider Benefit Fund was formed to help qualified racers. The only stipulations, Hamer said, are that the rider be injured in a race, and that he cannot take care of his medical costs.

All auctioned items come from donations made by manufacturers or distributors, or from the pro racers themselves. "Most of the merchandise from the manufacturers is brand-new, and sells for prices under retail," said Hammer. The riders' gear usually is gathered at the races, generally right after the event is run. The goods are put into the Fund's inventory, and then auctioned off during an MCD Consumer Show.

"One of the biggest auctions, pricewise," said Hamer, "was at Daytona 1983. Eleven former or current AMA Grand National champions gathered at Roxy Rockwood's radio show on Saturday evening for a photo session. Duplicates of the group photo sold for $10 each. Then we took bids for the right to be photographed with those same 11 champions. The bidding stopped at $2100 by Taylor White Construction, Dale Singleton's former sponsor. We arranged for the two other highest bidders—Don Brymer (Loudon roadrace promoter) and Dick Brandt (a Yamaha dealer) to be in the



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Freddie Spencer, poised like a mannequin

Modeling a $320 helmet.

THE QUICKEST WAY T

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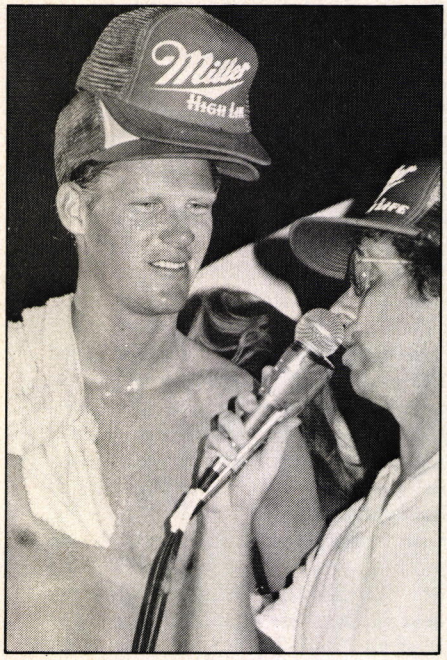
photo, too, at an additional $2100. That was $4200 from just that auction." And as of last summer, the Pro Rider Fund totaled more than $20,000.

The bidding for merchandise and rider souvenirs resumes at the Anaheim Show this December, and at the AMA season-opener in Houston during the first week of February in 1984. There'll be plenty of new items and used riding gear on the block, too, Hamer said. For instance, you can buy a new Arai helmet for less than retail price, or get a used one. One used Arai in particular was sold last year; it was the same helmet Freddie Spencer wore at the Belgian GP in 1982, his first-ever GP win. The price? A mere $320. After all, world champions don't come cheaply. —*Dain Gingerelli*



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Broc Glover after the bidding

Giving the shirt off his back.

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Practically every motocross fan dreams of being in Bob Hannah's boots

And you can, provided you make the highest bid.

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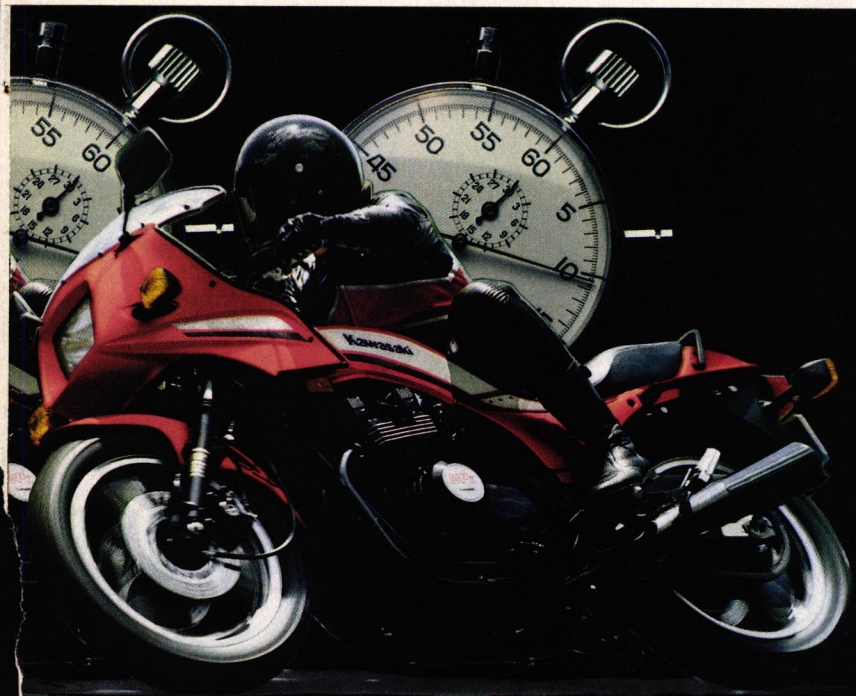

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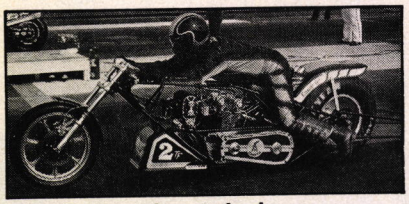


Elmer Trett got down to business

And officially topped the double-ton.

• 200-mph Kawasaki: Elmer Trett made motorcycle dragracing history recently when he made the first officially timed 200-mph quarter-mile. Trett went 201.34 mph with a 7.34-second E.T. on his Kawasaki Top Fueler at the Indianapolis National Motorcycle Racing Association (NMRA) U.S. Nationals in September. However, NMRA rules call for a back-up run equal to or better than the first one in order to set a record, and Trett's 199.11-mph run in the next round wasn't quite fast enough to do the job.

• This means war: Jim Harris, NMRA Field Director, recently proposed a dual-region drag championship series. According to Harris' plan, eastern and western regional class champions would meet at the end of the season to determine dragracing's elite. So far, Harris hasn't been given the green light from the NMRA board of directors to implement the plan.

• WSS wrap-up: David Bailey is the winner of the AMA's inaugural Wrangler Super Series. Bailey took the title by finishing one point ahead of Suzuki's Mark Barnett (860 to 859). In the process, Bailey won the Supercross and 250 National titles, too, while his Honda teammate Johnny O'Mara captured the 125cc crown. Yamaha's Broc Glover took top honors in the Open class.

• U.S. beat them: If there were any questions or doubts as to who the best motocross racers in the world are, the United States Motocross and Trophee des Nations team has settled the matter once again. The 1983 Yankee team, consisting of Broc Glover (Yamaha), Jeff Ward (Kawasaki), Mark Barnett (Suzuki) and newly crowned Wrangler Super Series champ David Bailey (Honda), won both the Motocross (250cc) and Trophee (500cc) des Nations last September, making it three in a row for America in the annual European classics. Glover and Bailey traded wins at the Motocross des Nations, and Glover won again in the first moto at the Trophee. Belgium's 125cc World Champion Eric Geboers won the second moto, in the process leading his team to a second-overall in both events.

• How soon they forget: It was only a year ago that Danny Chandler won all four motos of the Trophee and Motocross des Nations. This year, Magoo was listed only as an alternate rider, and spent the Trophee weekend 8,000 miles away competing in California at the Mammoth Mountain Motocross, where he won the Open class on Friday.

• Long-shot Shawn: Another American joined the list of world title holders, when Shawn Moran won the World Long Track Final at Prague, Czechoslovakia. Czech rider Jiri Stancl was second and Karl Maier of West Germany was third.

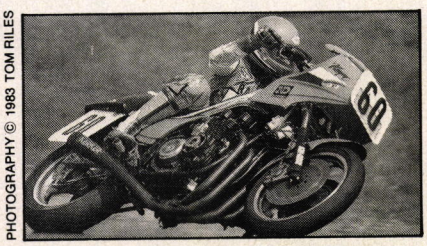
• World Speedway Final: America finally lost its two-year grip on the World Speedway Final, though, when Egon Muller won the title in his home country at Norden, West Germany. Billy Sanders (Australia) was second and Michael Lee (Great Britain) took third.

• Vee-four sale: Yamaha race director Ken Clark said that company's 1984 TZ500 production racer will be a vee-four, similar to Kenny Roberts' and Eddie Lawson's 1983 OW70 works bikes. No specifications or prices were given for the 500cc GP racers, to be introduced early in 1984.

• Rotary rumor: Inside sources at Yamaha also indicated the new TZ250 will have a rotary-valve engine. The rumor has been all but confirmed, too: Eddie Lawson was overheard saying the new TZ250 being tested in Japan did not have a side-by-side cylinder arrangement, indicating either a vee- or tandem-twin, two designs that could easily accommodate a rotary-valve intake system.

• Yamaha Superbike team: Yamaha is providing the Formula 1 and 2 ranks with trickery, but don't count on a Yamaha Superbike team this season. Ken Clark confirmed the possibility of a team, but not for 1984.

• Rainey reigns: Kawasaki and Wayne Rainey—against all odds—captured the AMA Superbike championship when Rainey won the Willow Springs Pro/Am, the next-to-last race of the season. Honda's Mike Baldwin crashed in the first heat, puncturing a lung. His Interceptor-based racer, which caught fire after the accident, was a write-off. The Willow Springs win was Rainey's fourth in a row, an AMA Superbike record.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1983 TOM RILES

Wayne Rainey on line to the championship

Now he'll be in the bread line.

• Kaw out to pasture: Following its third-in-a-row Superbike championship, Kawasaki announced that it is pulling out of roadracing in America. Mike Vaughn, Director of Communications for Kawasaki, said that the decision to suspend all roadracing activities was because the company had "achieved 100 percent of our goals in Superbike racing." Vaughn added that the Green Machine will maintain a professional motocross effort, and provide support for amateur roadracers in America, at least through 1984.

• Roberts at Daytona: Although it's almost a certainty that Kenny Roberts won't contest any championship series next season, thare is talk of him racing at Daytona. There's no official word on KR at Daytona yet, but sources at Yamaha said Roberts' and Lawson's OW69 square-fours are being readied for the 1984 Daytona 200. And Ken Clark pretty much confirmed that even if Roberts does ride Daytona, his racing career looks to be limited: "I'm pretty sure Roberts will do Daytona again and I think that'll be the end."

• Roberts on Daytona: When the Daytona question was put to Roberts, he was undecided. The biggest factor, he pointed out, was the two-stroke rule. He said, "I don't know what they (AMA) have in mind as far as rules. Who in their right mind wants to race 750s that go 190 mph when there are other guys out there that are doing only 130?" Translation: King Kenny doesn't want to race the 680cc OW69 fire-breather. He indicated he was in favor of the F1 500cc rule, which restricts two-strokes 750s to pre-1981 vintage. "I'd rather do 160 and win," he said, "than 190 and win."

• Randy rumor: With Roberts leaving Yamaha's GP fold, and considering Suzuki's cutback in international racing, there's been talk of Randy Mamola joining Yamaha. It makes sense, because with Mamola and Lawson as team riders, Yamaha would have the two men most capable of beating Honda and Freddie Spencer. As Yamaha spokesman said about signing Mamola: "I believe we've (Yamaha) talked with him . . . at least the name has come up."

—Dain Gingerelli

Winners & Losers

Assembly-Line Race Tactics

"You may have seen the end of Yamaha works bikes." Ken Clark, 1983

• Motocross racing revolves around money: Team riders get it, sponsors spend it, and the factory teams that form the nucleus of the sport use it by the truckload. But some of the manufacturers are beginning to feel the pinch of racing's ever-spiraling costs. Or, as Yamaha's race director, Ken Clark, bluntly put it, "Factory support programs are costing us too much money."

One way to cut back on the high cost of racing would be to reduce the expense of building racebikes by using fewer exotic, one-off parts. That's a move, however, that almost no factory team wants to be the first to make, simply because such a budget-built racer probably wouldn't be competitive with a megabuck, unobtanium special. Money is horsepower in racing, and it's hard to beat cubic dollars; no team wants to be caught short on its spending.

Yamaha and Clark came up with an idea to get around that problem, though: Change the AMA professional motocross rules to require *all* the teams to use production-based motorcycles. Clark proposed the rule change to the AMA Motocross Advisory Board last summer, in the hope of getting it passed for the 1984 season. But the Board members (five manufacturer representatives, five promoters and a chairman) failed to act on the proposal, saying 1984 would be too soon to implement such a drastic change in the racing program. Some teams, such as Honda, had already begun testing 1984 works bikes even before the conclusion of the 1983 Wrangler Super Series in August.

Clark's proposal would admit only modified production motocrossers in WSS racing, while allowing an open-door policy of any and all modifications. That means cylinder-porting specifications, carburetor dimensions, chassis improvements—anything—would be possible, as long as the information was made public.

The proposed modified-production rule makes good financial sense, Clark claims, because race teams could then use cheaper, mass-produced bikes and parts, not high-dollar, one-off items. And all the racing pieces, he says, would have to be homologated by the AMA, thus requiring a certain number to be built; those parts would then be made available—for a price. That price should be low enough to eliminate any chance the manufacturers would monopolize speed secrets at the privateers' expense.

Price might not have anything to do with implementing Clark's proposal, however. One of the primary concerns with such a rule is how best to govern it. Cheating, says Kawasaki's race director Gary Mathers, could run rampant. He says he saw too much rule-bending in AMA Superbike roadracing during that class's formative years to believe it wouldn't happen in motocross, too. His solution is to have a tech committee oversee all WSS racing, keeping tabs on the homologation procedure. But, he adds, forming such a committee within the bureaucracy of the AMA would be akin to "opening a can of worms."

The potential for cheating notwithstanding, Clark contends his modified-production rule would help the privateers by putting them on an equal-equipment footing with the factories. As it stands now, he says, the privateers are being "buffaloed by the factories with trickery." And trickery, he adds, costs too much. "It's too damn expensive for factories to support this type of racing (huge factory-backed programs) forever," Clark said. "It's not going to last much longer."

It's certainly not going to last much longer for Yamaha, anyway, because that company intends to put its team riders on production bikes for the coming season. "They'll be YZs modified according to the rule I proposed," Clark said, "and all information on their modifications will be made available to privateers. . . . I'm willing to put my money where my mouth is."

Obviously, Clark is confident his riders will be competitive on production bikes, and he's not too worried about Yamaha's team riders getting blown-off by privateers if his proposed rule should come to pass in 1985. In fact, he thinks the current winning riders would continue to win AMA nationals and Supercross events. "The factory riders train harder, work harder than the privateers," he said. Mathers agreed, saying, "I don't think it (a modified-production rule) will close the gap between the privateers and factory riders."

If Clark's rule wouldn't really help the privateers, then, who *would* benefit from it? Well, Yamaha, for one. That company is still smarting from its unsuccessful attempt to unseat Honda as the Number One seller of motorcycles, and the vast amounts of time and money motocross racing consumes in research and development could perhaps be better spent elsewhere.

It could be money well-spent—or saved. Because the only thing Yamaha has to lose this season, if it abides by Clark's modified-production rule, are races. *—Dain Gingerelli* ●

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Yamaha factory rider Ron Lechien busts a berm with his Unobtanium Special

But next year he and his teammates will be riding Red Tag Specials.

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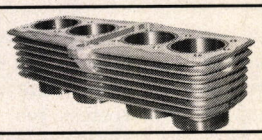

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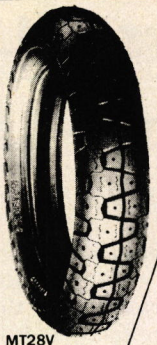

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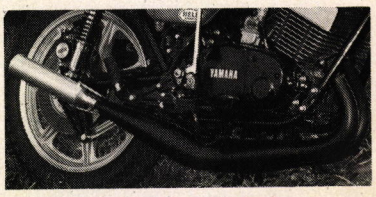

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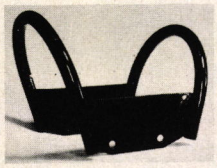

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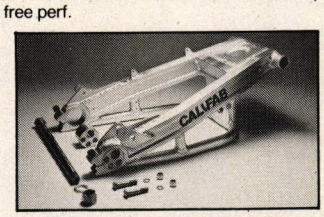

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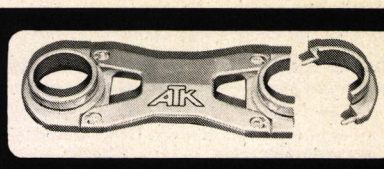

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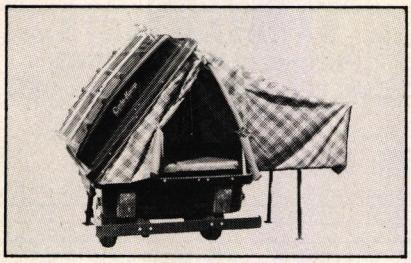

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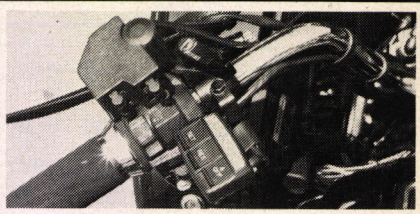

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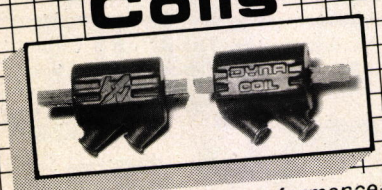

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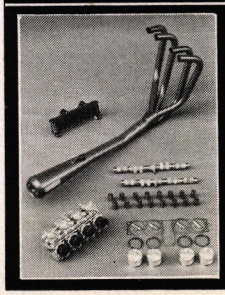

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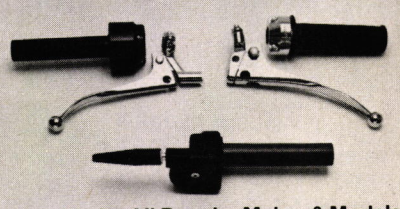

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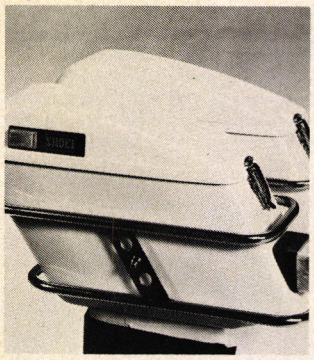
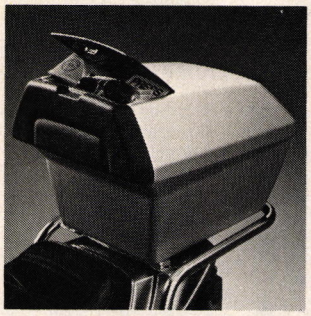
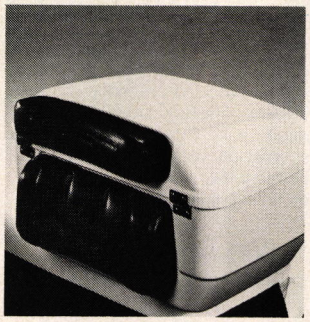


The model SB-4, shown here, also comes equipped with hinged, locking covers, side reflectors, dual-function stop/tail and turnsignal lights and twin bumper rails.

The model SB-18 bags measure 18⅛″L, 13⅘″H, 7½″W and weigh less than 17 pounds. Both lids are hinged on the outside edges and include dual keyed locks. Model SB-18A saddlebags come with guard rails attached.



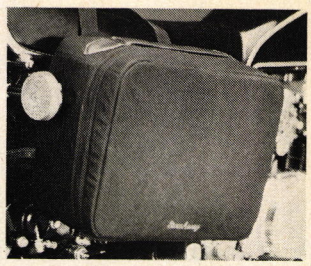
Shoei's model SB-21 and SB-22 rear trunks both are equipped with padded backrests. The SB-21 measures 16¼″L, 10½″H, 13⅛″ W and weighs less than seven pounds.



The SB-22 is recommended for 400cc and larger bikes and measures 20¼″L, 11¼″H, 15½″W. Weight of the SB-22 is 11 pounds.

Slipstreamer, Inc.
9835 W. 96th St.
Eden Prarie, Minnesota 55344
(612) 941-9000
Price: Stowaway Mini Soft Luggage $74.95
Stowaway Soft Luggage $129.95
Tail Trunk $49.95

Slipstreamer's Stowaway soft-style luggage is constructed of 100-denier, coated Cordura, and utilize Velcro fastener straps and quick-release fasteners. The new Mini Soft bags were designed for smaller loads and lighter bikes. Each unit measures 12″L, 11″H, 6½″W.



The regular-sized Stowaway saddlebags measure 16″L, 12″H, 7″W with a capacity of just under two cubic feet. Each of these bags features a universal-type mounting system and dust covers.

Slipstreamer's Tail Trunk is constructed of the same type of coated Cordura fabric as used in the Stowaway bags. Like the Slipstreamer standard-sized saddlebags, the Tail Trunk comes equipped with two-way zippers and a carrying handle. The Tail Trunk is large enough to contain a small cooler.

Continued

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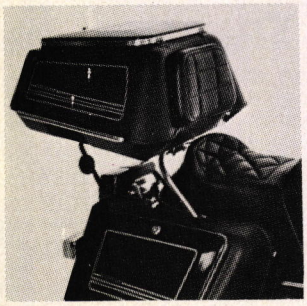
P. O. Box 2826
925 Turnbull Dr.
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(800) 635-6103
Price: Saddlebags $155 pr
Trunk bag $75
Overnight bags $44.95 each

Tour Rider's soft-style luggage is made of DuPont ballistic fiber—a material used in bulletproof vests. Both the 1050-denier ballistics material and the 420-denier nylon Packcloth are treated with a urethane coating for water resistance. The saddlebags feature quick-release mounting with Fastex buckles, two-way zippers, integral carrying handles, zippered side compartments and optional, snap-on rain and dust covers. The Tour Rider Saddlebag dimensions are 15½″L, 12½″H, 8½″W.

Both the Trunk Bag and Overnight rear bags use the same construction, materials and offer the same features as the Tour Rider Saddlebags. The Trunk Bag's tempered hardwood base and triple-strap mounting allow it to be secured to any motorcycle rack, while the twin Overnight bags locate on either side of the Trunk Bag and mount with Velcro strips and nylon straps with Fastex buckles. The Trunk Bag measures 12½″L, 8½″H, 15½″W, and the Overnighters each have dimensions of 11½″L, 9½″H, 5½″W.

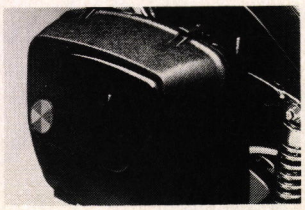


Vetter Corporation
Rantoul, Illinois 61866
(217) 893-9300
Price: Saddlebags $460 pr (including all necessary mounting hardware)
Tail Trunk $261.65
Complete Saddlebag/Tail Trunk Assembly $721.65

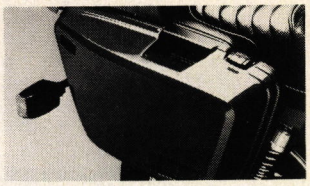
Vetter saddlebags and trunks are constructed of rotationally molded polystyrene, with ABS-plastic doors and side panels. Each Vetter saddlebag or trunk is mounted utilizing Vetter's patented Floating Mount System, claimed to ensure maximum mounting rigidity and minimal vibration. The polystyrene parts have a pebble-grain finish, while the ABS-plastic pieces have a glossy coat. The Vetter detachable saddlebags offer either gold or chrome trim, color-matching to current popular colors, mounting hardware for over 100 models, and a 3600-cubic-inch storage capacity. Each Vetter saddlebag measures 14″H, 12½″W. Vetter claims the recessed areas in the bag's rear panels allow retention of stock turnsignals. Standard Tail Trunk features include a padded passenger backrest, quick and secure attachment to the saddlebag mounting hardware, color-matching, rear running lights, side reflectors, striping, gold or chrome trim, and 2800 cubic inches of storage. The Vetter trunk measures 14″H, 12½″W and weighs 14 pounds.

Yamaha Parts Distributors
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630
(714) 761-7300
Price: (Without Mounting Hardware)
Sofpack Saddlebags $109.95
X-1 Bags $129.95
Seca 750 Saddlebags $305.95
Detachable Luggage $315.95
Detachable Top Case $169.95
Tour Deluxe Saddlebag and Travel Trunk Package (approx.) $1000 (Including hardware)
Exciter Travel Trunk $139.95
Tour Trunk $189.95
Seca Travel Trunk $195.95

Yamaha's Sofpack saddlebags are just one example of the assortment of motorcycle bags and rear trunks that company offers. These bags are constructed of Cordura nylon with a water-resistant coating. Standard features on the Sofpack bags include side panel stiffeners to retain the bag's shape, heat-resistant bottoms to protect against exhaust heat damage, an adjustable, universal mounting system, interior pouches for separating cargo, quick-release buckles and more then 1100 cubic inches of interior space per bag.



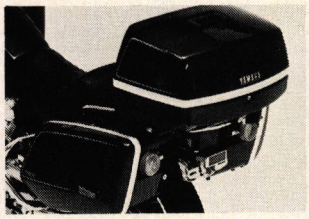
Yamaha X-1 saddlebags are made of ABS plastic in a color-coordinated finish to match Yamaha OEM paint. They come equipped with lockable, weather-sealed lids, side reflectors and mounting hardware. Interior capacity of the X-1 bags is 900 cubic inches per bag.



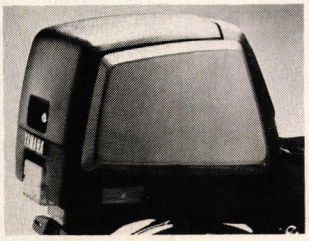
Seca 750 bags are designed specifically for installation on that bike. Each bag offers a 1200 cubic-inch capacity and comes with removable nylon liners. A gasketed tongue-and-groove rim is used to provide positive weatherproofing. Yamaha claims these saddlebags attach directly to the Seca Luggage Carrier with no additional brackets required.

The Yamaha Detachable Luggage is constructed of ABS plastic with an injection-molded polymede mounting system, which includes a rear luggage rack. Other features include internal tie straps, locking systems, carrying handles, quick-detachable mounting, and a 40-liter capacity.

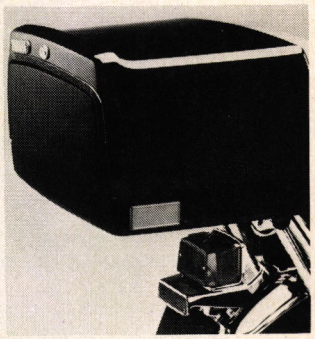
Yamaha's Detachable Top Case, which matches the Detachable Luggage, is also made of ABS plastic and is similar in its fittings and capacity. It can be purchased with detachable or standard mounting systems.



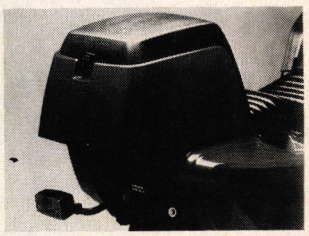
Tour Deluxe saddlebags and trunks are available for Yamaha's Maxim 750 and Virago models. Both pieces of luggage feature locking, detachable mounting, recessed carrying handles and ABS-plastic construction. The Deluxe saddlebags measure 16″L, 13½″H, 9¼″W, and include chrome-plated rear frame guards. Saddlebag liners and shoulder straps are available as an option. The Deluxe trunk measures 15″L, 13″H, 20″W, and includes a contoured passenger backrest.



A travel trunk is available that matches the styling of Yamaha's Exciter. It features polypropylene construction, weather sealing and a keyed locking machanism. This trunk takes up the passenger's space on the seat, but provides a padded backrest for the rider.



Yamaha's Tour trunk provides a full 2500 cubic inches of cargo capacity. It features a weather-resistant clamshell lid, keyed locking mechanism, a padded passenger backrest, and ABS-plastic construction. The trunk is color-matched to Yamaha Star Silver, New Yamaha Black and Ruby Red finishes.



The Seca Travel trunk is designed specifically for the Seca 750, and to match the lines of the Seca 750 saddlebags. Standard features include a gasketed tongue-and-groove construction, a keyed locking mechanism and an 1800 cubic-inch cargo capacity. The Seca Luggage Carrier is necessary to mount the trunk.

Yoshimura Research & Development
4555 Carter Court
Chino, California 91710
(714) 628-4722
Price: Buddy Bag $69.95

Yoshimura's Buddy Bag is manufactured from DuPont Cordura nylon. The bag is designed to retain its shape without internal stiffeners. The Buddy Bag measures 12″L, 9″H, 9½″W, with a second compartment measuring 9½″L, 7″H, 3″W sewn onto the outside. Standard features include a detachable shoulder strap, a clear, elasticized rain-bonnet and built-in bungee cords. The bungee cords pass through the lower main section of the bag and are used to mount the unit to the passenger portion of the seat or luggage rack. The Buddy Bag is available in silver, red or blue. ●

LETTERS *Riding fast, Riding silly and Kudos for the lawyers.*

WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR

The absurdity of your "World's Fastest Streetbike" test is so noticeable it hardly bears mentioning. You now tell me, 10 months after I bought my V65 Magna, that the Kawasaki 750 Turbo is fastest. Where have you guys been?

I notice that it now takes turbocharging and a trick fairing to do the same thing Honda did with a plain, cruiser-vee bike. And I'm certain that when Honda brings out its '84 line the competition will, once again, have to play catch-up and redesign its "fastest and quickest" streetbike.

Nile C. Byerns Jr.
Silver Springs, Maryland

So where will that leave you and your V65? Doubly slow?—ed.

REMATCH

I own a V65 Magna and, although I don't know what it'll do in the quarter-mile, I do know that it'll hit 147 mph at 8000 rpm in sixth. I think you should ride the V65 again. When I made my 147-mph pass I even had to shut down because I was running out of road—I believe I could have gone 150-plus mph if conditions permitted. I know that the top speed you got isn't accurate. Test the bike again.

Mark Wells
Trotwood, Ohio

We know our clocks were accurate and we didn't run out of road; 139.15 mph was the honest top speed—ed.

30 YEARS IN TOP GEAR

In 1953 a French motorcycle magazine tested the Vincent Black Shadow and timed it at 128 mph. So after 30 years of refinement we get 17 more mph, at the expense of bikes that, for the most part, aren't owner-maintainable. And how much will you bet that parts, even today, are easier to get for the Vincent?

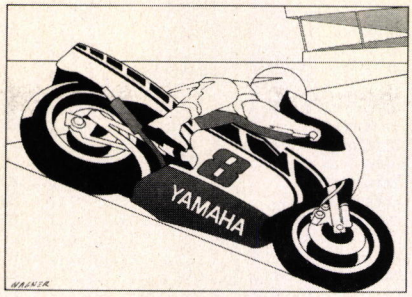
Bruce Metcalf
Des Plains, Illinois

No one here will even touch that bet, Metcalf. We know all about you Britbike fanatics—ed.

CONTRABAND DEFINED

The "Smuggler's Handbook" (September '83) was both interesting and informative, but I have one question: Why blow the bucks on an imported Euro-spec Interceptor? You have to know that Honda will outdate the bike in six months to a year.

Instead, why not be the first kid on *both* sides of Topeka to own a Motobecane 500, or some exotic half-



breed like an Amazonas? Just think what it would be like to announce that your new Enfield Bullet 350 had just arrived from India.

Randy Normann
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Just think—ed.

VOICE OF AMERICA

I've never been incensed enough to get into the running battle between you and your readers, but after reading the Letters column of the October '83 issue I had to comment.

Why is everyone so surprised about all the Honda publicity? Let's face it, Honda has roughly 57 percent of the total motorcycle market, and that's the American public speaking—not CYCLE GUIDE magazine. Naturally, with all its income the Big H can afford to pump vast sums of money into R&D, insuring that it has superior motorcycles, and then spend just as much—if not more—advertising them. CYCLE GUIDE isn't prejudiced toward Honda, it's just telling it like it is.

David Higginson
San Antonio, Texas

LEGAL BEAGLES

I've kept close tabs on the ongoing debate in the Letters column concerning the propriety of the action taken by Harley-Davidson to curb the number of Japanese motorcycles sold in the U.S. At first, the screams of "buy American" vs. "crybaby Harley" were amusing, but what was really amazing was the public's inability to focus on the real issue. And in all the letters no one has seen fit to suggest an alternative solution.

Harley-Davidson's first and foremost obligation was to insure its survival. The company's decision to petition the ITC obviously was one of business judgment. Personally, I would have been disappointed if Harley-Davidson had done anything less. The results that Harley-Davidson obtained, and the impact of those results, stem directly from the company's effective utilization of existing laws, rules and regulations enacted by Congress and the ITC. As a recent law school graduate, I have been more than a little impressed by the expertise displayed by the legal counsel of Harley-Davidson during the ITC hearings.

It is about time that the public in general quit condemning Harley-Davidson for taking legal action open to it by the laws of the land. Simply put, Harley-Davidson is not to blame. Harley-Davidson did not create the ITC, Congress did. Harley-Davidson did not sign the ITC ruling into effect, President Reagan did. If you don't like what this manufacturer was able to do, write your congressman, write the ITC or write to Ronald Reagan. Don't chastise Harley-Davidson for exercising a legal privilege. It you want tariff-free motorcycles, change the laws. This is the way our system works.

Martin DeWulf
Carbondale, Illinois

And a team of lawyers at least as good as the ones that represented Harley wouldn't hurt, either. Their success before the ITC was nothing less than astounding—ed.

TEXTBOOK PERFECT

I have a contribution to the "Laurel and Hardy Riding Academy" (West's Side, October '83) and it comes from personal experience. How about when you're late for lunch, hurry into the donut-shop parking lot and lean the bike over *before* the sidestand is all the way out? Does that qualify as an "I've got it, Ollie, I've wooaah . . .?"

Norb Mandrick
Portage, Michigan

Sure does—ed.

NEXT CHAPTER

I can add one other way that motorcycle riders can look foolish: They can ride fat. At 300 pounds, I know I don't present a gallant figure on my sagging Suzuki, but I'm having fun. So I guess I'm also an Ollie.

R.T. Strickland
Citrus Heights, California

But where were you when Mandrick pulled into the donut shop?—ed. •

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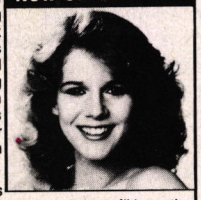
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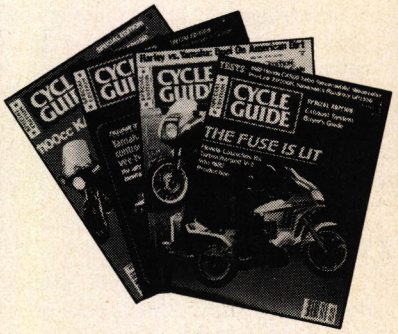

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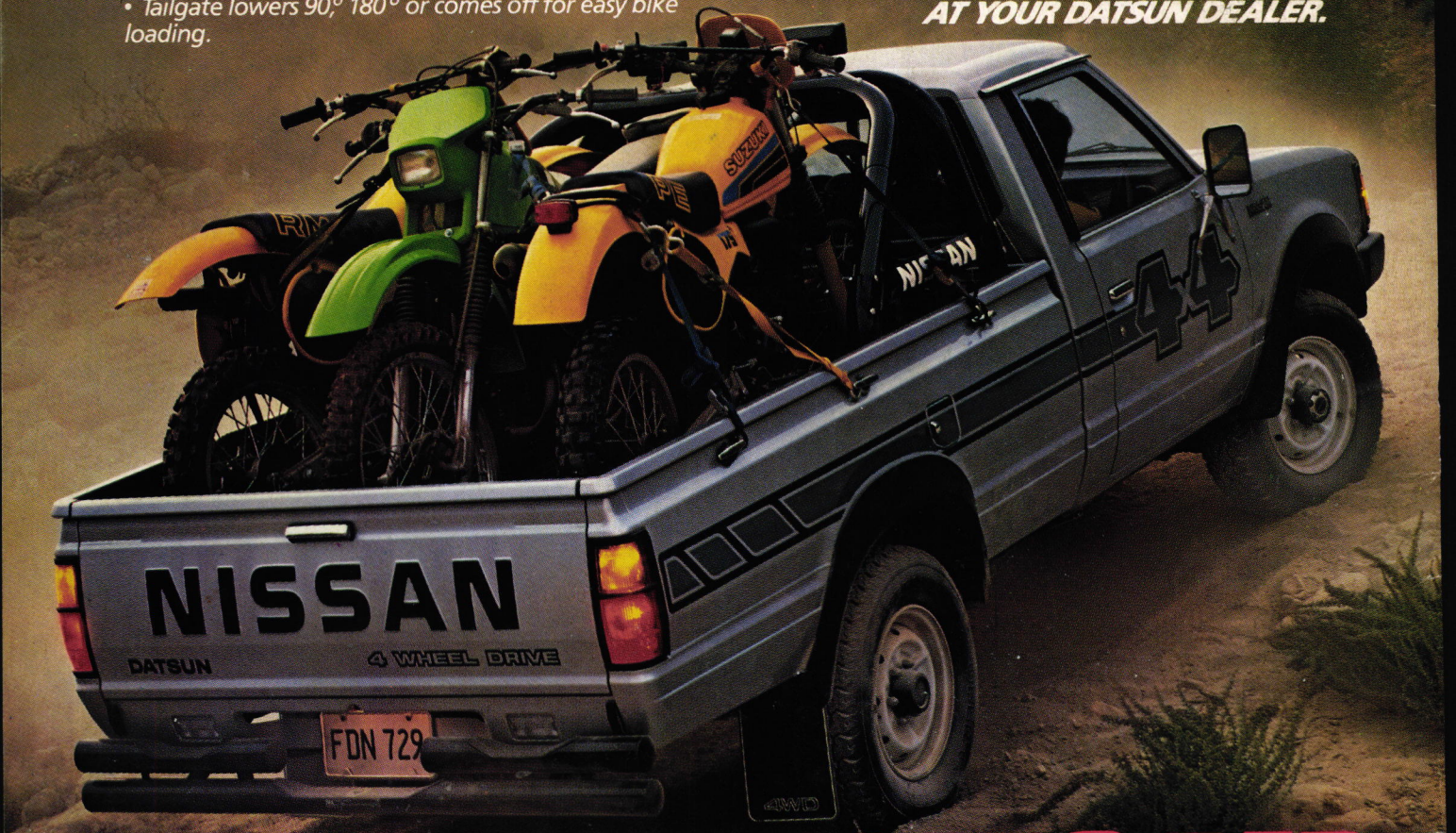

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